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issue two

dec '95

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PLAY



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Lone Soldier

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Philosoma

Twisted Metal

Starblade α

Viewpoint

Prime Goal Ex

Off World Interceptor

Total Eclipse Turbo

Air Combat

Tekken
**pull out and
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Madden '96, Krazy Ivan, Tilt**

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**PC
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ROM**

"PlayStation owners wanting a respite from all that frenetic arcade-like action couldn't pick a better game."

GamePro 90%

"...by completely re-thinking this classic and adding, quite literally, another dimension, Psygnosis have created a game that is as brilliantly original as the first Lemmings game. Buy it."

PC Attack 94 %

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PC Gamer 94%

"3D Lemmings is the best head-scratcher money can buy. That's a fact."

Ultimate Future Games 90%



Lemmings

BE AN INDIVIDUAL. JOIN THE MASSES



PlayStation Wired

06 We've got the world of PlayStation wired. Here's where you'll get all the most informed gossip on the Sony grapevine as we dig deep for the juiciest, muddiest exposés. This is the section all the other magazines read to find out what's going on. Honest.



Wall of Games

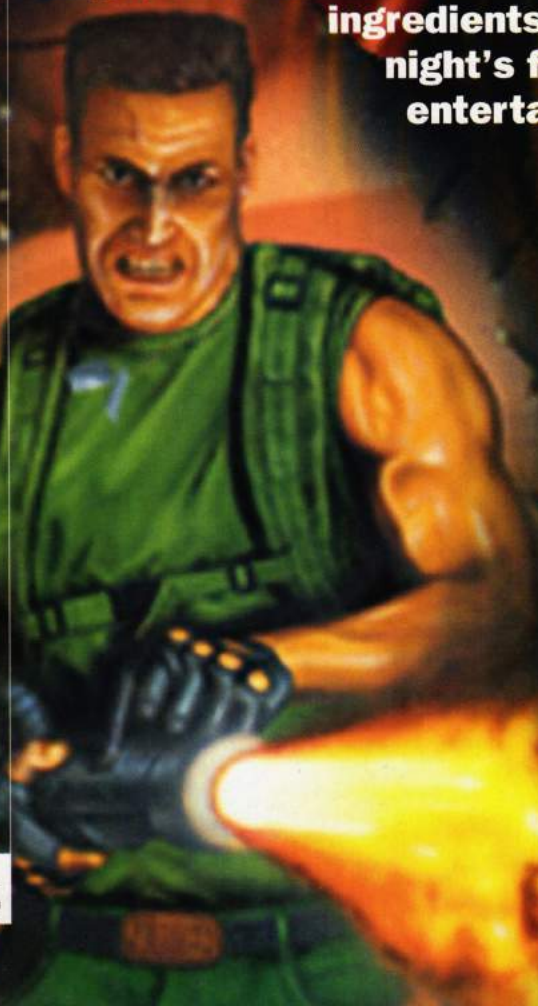
Tekken - All the moves

49 Every month we will produce a pull-out and keep wall chart listing all the big moves on one of the latest PlayStation games. This month it's the turn of that beat 'em-up supreme - Tekken.

Cover Review

Lone Soldier

20 A world exclusive first review of Telstar's superb new blaster. Big guns, heavy weaponry and rabid dogs, *Lone Soldier* has all the ingredients for a night's family entertainment.



INSIDE PLAY

the 100% Unofficial PL

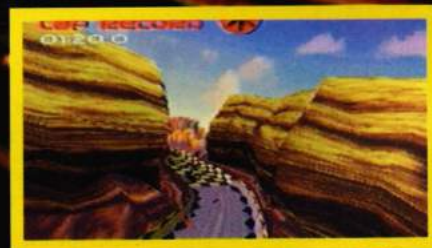
Station Master

83 When you're as fantastic at games as us, it's your job to help other people who aren't. That's why our tips train always stops for the Station Master. Cheats, guides and a helping hand are provided for one and all. All aboard:

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Theme Park.....86
Striker '9688

Arena

97 Our survey said "give us a letters page." So here you are, your very own arena to fight out all those written battles. Send in those E-mails and letters people!



WorkStations

This issue our WorkStations include:

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And among those targeted for evaluation this issue:

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issue 2

PLAYSTATION Magazine

Subscriptions

75 Save up to 25% a year of the price of your copies of *Play*, by taking out a subscription now! We'll even send it directly to your home!

PlayBack

94 Every title ever released appears here along with its relevant *Play* score. Issue by issue this section we'll adjust scores as games date. Invaluable!

Definition of Sound Pt 2

90 The definition of sound fades out this month with an in-depth report about the revolutionary new surround technique known as QSound, plus we lift the lid on how music and video games are coming together in a big way, and the startling results we can expect in the near future.

In the Curry House with...

96 Mevlut Dinc, the Vivid Image supremo, has been slaving on PlayStation *Street Racer*. The poor chap deserved a break, so we took him out for a vindaloo and got him to spill his guts, so to speak.

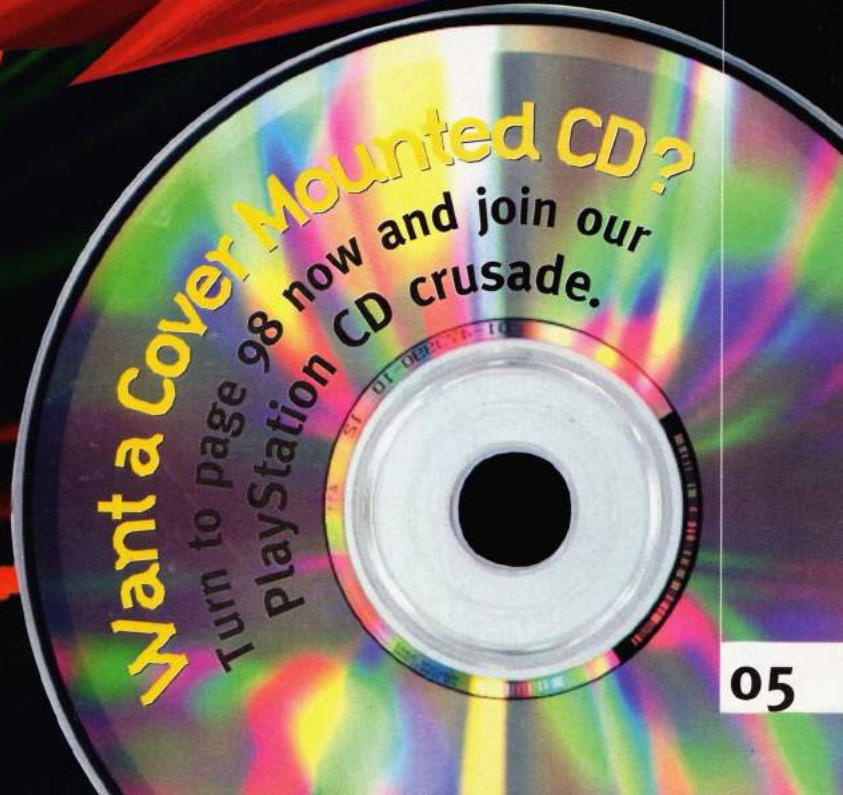
Work, Test and Play

76 So ya wanna make games? In the first of a two-part feature we take a look at how games giants EA and Psygnosis (Sony Interactive), produce such classics as *Wipeout* and *FIFA '96*.

Big Soccer Compo!

53 Win a Sony PlayStation complete with a copy of Warner Interactive's brilliant *Striker '96*. There are even several copies of the game for the runners up. Goal!

Want a Cover Mounted CD?
Turn to page 98 now and join our PlayStation CD crusade.





You should pat yourself on the back. We all should. Because one thing is for sure, without you and me they couldn't have done it. They needed us to support the machine at launch and they'll need us just as importantly to continue supporting the machine over the forthcoming year. The PlayStation does not belong to Sony, it belongs to everyone who enjoys top quality gaming. We are all partners in this venture, we all own shares in the console's future, and as long as they keep the excellent software coming there'll be no bored room revolts. Geddit? Let's *Play!*

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Wondered why so few games produced by firms not called Sony-something are in the shops? Read on...

rather excellent *Wipeout* and Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's very own, and only slightly less sexy *Ridge Racer* have put a massive strain on the firm's capability to manufacture enough CDs to meet the demand for PlayStation software. This has apparently led to games due for release from third parties being held up, as Sony doesn't have the capacity to produce enough CDs for all the titles now finished.

▼ Or not, as the case may be.

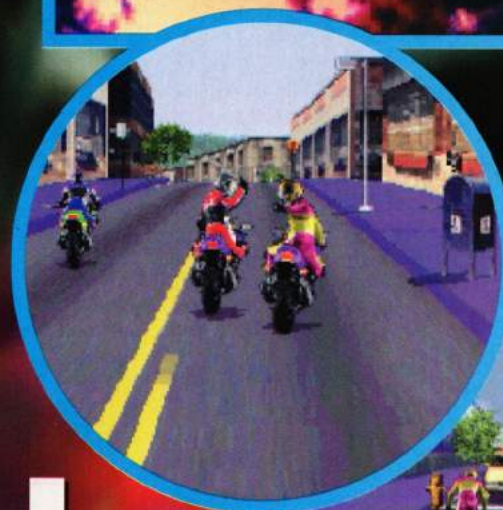
06

STATION ed Demand uction ttleneck



▲ Wait your turn, says the man from Sony.

◀ Road Rash: The PlayStation version of the EA classic is coming soon.



So, we contacted the usually aimable SCEE in the form of UK managing director Ray Maguire to clarify the situation only to be somewhat bizarrely told by a spokesperson that he had declined to answer. Something is obviously going on. Piercing the story together from other sources, *Play* understands that a combination of having to fulfil re-orders for *Wipeout* and *Ridge Racer*, the limited capacity of Sony's Austrian plant (the only one where PlayStation CDs are produced) and the clamour amongst third parties to have their game approved and manufactured before Christmas, has unfortunately resulted in number of third party titles being pushed to the back of the queue whilst Sony finishes running off enough of its own titles to cash in on Christmas peak selling. Which isn't that surprising. If you own the shop, you put your games on the shelf first.

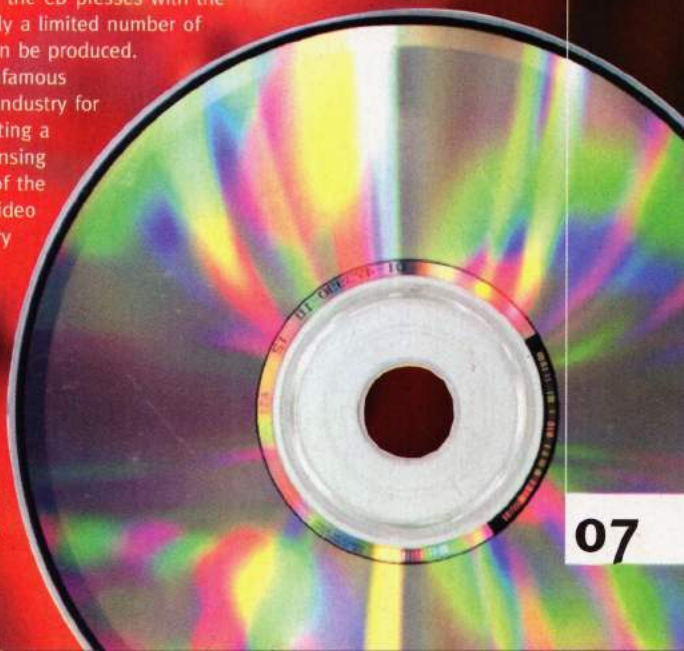
Nobody is really begrudging Sony the chance to make some money, the firm

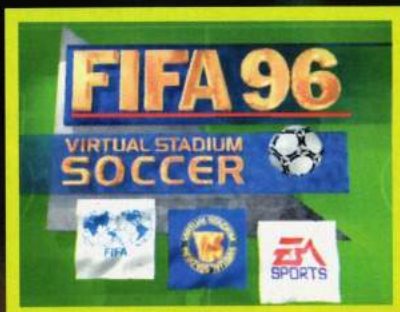
makes next to nothing on sales of the PlayStation to keep the price down, but games being held back because there aren't enough CD presses to go round is a worry. If games really are being held up simply because the factory isn't big enough, start using another factory!

There is another factor. You see, as well as insisting on handling manufacturing of all PlayStation CDs itself, Sony also has a lengthy, and laudable, approval process to make sure final games aren't bugged and, well, are good enough to be worthy to join the ranks of PlayStation games. This is all well and good but does push the release of games back by as much as six weeks, with the result that some titles such as *Assault Rigs* and *Defcon 5* will not now be available before next year.

Although nobody would say so on record (possibly because Sony might get a little upset if its software industry partners start criticising them in public) *Play* has heard grumblings to the effect

that Sony is becoming the new Nintendo, adopting a system of "production windows" where each title will have, say, three days on the CD presses with the result that only a limited number of each game can be produced. Nintendo is infamous amongst the industry for allegedly creating a restrictive licensing system (one of the reasons the video games industry was investigated by the monopolies and mergers commission earlier this year) which some have said involved delaying titles from other





firms to make sure its own games hit the streets first. Whilst nobody is directly accusing Sony of adopting the same practices, firms are known to be unhappy at some of the things they are being asked to do, with

the result that they are having to work round the clock to meet deadlines imposed on them by fears of missing their production 'window' and thus being unable to get their game in to the shops before Christmas. Thankfully, games such as *Primal Rage*, *Actua Golf*, *FIFA '96*, *Road Rash* and *Wing Commander III* should still make it out in time, albeit in December rather than November. Others, however, may not be so lucky. Of course, if the problems aren't due to production capacity, the only other reason for the hold ups is that Sony is dictating to firms when and how it can release games to fulfil a pre-ordained schedule

of how many games and what type of games will be available before Christmas. *Play* feels, however, that this is highly unlikely. Not only is it outrageous, it would be daft to resort to the same practices criticised by the government only a few months ago, and well, surely it's illegal, restraint of trade and all that? *Play* is confident that Sony is smart enough to sort it out in the end. After all, this is the firm that only six months ago told games industry newspaper CTW that "arrogance is not going to be our style" (CTW 10/4/95) and that the firm

would conduct business in a rather more communicative manner than certain other Japanese conglomerates. To date they have established excellent relationships with all parts of the games industry, managed one of the most successful launches in videogames history and produced some really great games already. So surely they can make a few more CDs.

And well, if you're going to have problems, it's not a bad one to have, is it? Having so many people wanting to release games on your machine, that you have trouble supplying CDs to everyone. Can't see too many Saturn games being held up by overcrowding, can you? Actually, can't really see that many Saturn games full stop.



▲ FIFA '96: It looks gorgeous and it's still not the final version yet!

▼ FIFA '96: The 'virtual stadium' technology is absolutely blinding.



Acclaim fully probed up

Aclaim might not quite be producing its normal top-quality product yet on the PlayStation (With the exception of *NBA Jam T.E.*) but this should be changing very soon. The firm has just pulled off one of the biggest, and longest-running, buyouts of development talent the videogames market has ever seen, acquiring Probe Entertainment and Sculptured Software, the world's largest independent development studios. These names may not be familiar to you because Probe and Sculptured are about as close a thing to a programming factory as you get. What they do is take on contracts for individual publishers, and their credits include forthcoming titles *Primal Rage* and *FIFA '96* plus classics such as *Mortal Kombat*, *Mortal Kombat II* and *Batman Forever* on various machines. Now Acclaim, lucky sods, have got all that talent to themselves.



Striker

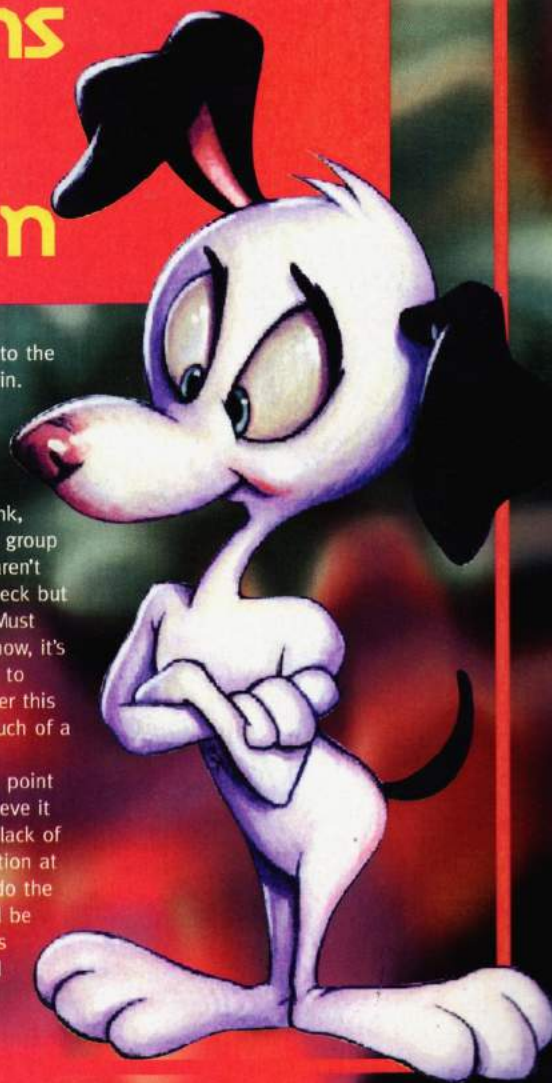
**The brilliance of football. Just imagine it
24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

Football, football, football. Women are right, men have only got one thing on their mind. But then nothing else is likely to get a look in with Striker '96. (Awarded 93% and called "Addictive, enjoyable, orgasmic fun" by Gamepro. While Dave Perry of Gamemaster TV said: "Striker '96, PlayStation soccer game of the year. Official!) It captures all the thrills and excitement of football and is even more absorbing than the game itself, with ultra smooth panning angles, perfectly animated players and unbelievably fast 3-D graphics. It's definitely a black armband day. "Too right, Arsenal have lost again".



Jim worms his way 2 PlayStation

Earthworm Jim 2 is coming to the PlayStation thanks to Virgin. Earthworm Jim was a seriously good platform game which appeared on the consoles last year. It's being developed by a different programming team, Screaming Pink, from the original, Shiny. Who we think are a group of people who used to work for Shiny, but aren't quite sure about that. We called Virgin to check but the person we spoke to wasn't sure either. Must find out. For now, it's still too early to know whether this will make much of a difference. Anyway, the point is that believe it or not, there's a lack of good platform games on PlayStation at the moment so if Screaming Pink can do the business with Earthworm Jim 2, it'll be a good thing. Earthworm Jim 2 is set for release Summer '96 and we'll be following its development closely.



Warners get their act together

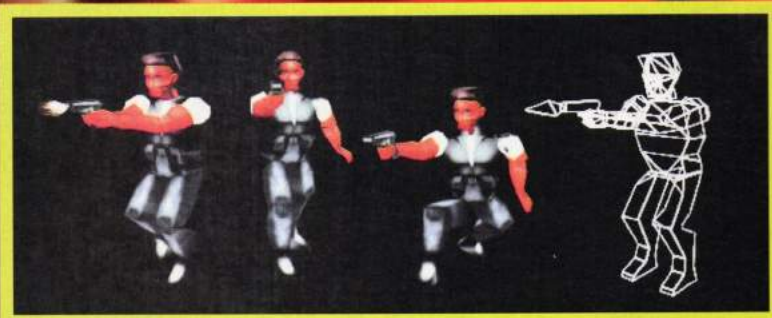
Time Warner is a massive media conglomerates which until now has been running two separate games companies, both subsidiaries of rival Warner divisions. No more. Someone high up has finally come to the conclusion that this makes no sense, whatsoever, and decided that Warner Interactive Entertainment (*Striker '96*), a unit of Warner Music International, and Time Warner Interactive (*Primal Rage*) must merge. Which we're delighted about, as we might be able to remember the right phone number now. WIE has had the last laugh as staff as the Northampton-based Time Warner Interactive, have got to move down to Warner Interactive Entertainment's London offices.

The results of the merger should see the two companies' pooled resources allow for a larger presence in the videogames industry and should enable the united company produce many more big titles for the PlayStation. Well, that's what the thinking is anyway. We've heard whispers that this will include an outing on PlayStation for a revamped Z, the hotly-tipped forthcoming PC game being developed by those clever monkeys, the Bitmap Brothers. Smart. Hold on. What's this? More news...

...but Bros turns to Acclaim

Allegiance update

Team 17's *Allegiance*, featured last issue, is coming along nicely. The artists are currently working on improving the animation, and, as you can see, it looks like it's shaping up well.



Just when the Warners start getting their act together, Warner Brothers, the Hollywood film giant, has decided to team up with Acclaim. Major corporations eh? A phrase involving arses and elbows spring to mind. As a result, Acclaim will get their hands on the rights to a number of the Warner Bros films.

Actually, we're not being fair here, Acclaim and Warner Bros have jumped into bed together and both enjoyed the experience several times in the past, so it's not that surprising they've hooked up again. Past glories include *Batman Forever*. and (relatively) interestingly enough, Acclaim's proprietary motion-capture technology was actually used for some of the special effects in *Batman Forever* the film.

Johnny Bazookatone nears completion

The forthcoming rock and roll platformer from US Gold, *Johnny Bazookatone*, is very near completion. We've just had a sneak preview in the office, and the game is looking rather sexy, with some smart SGI rendered graphics and lots of neat little touches. One of the biggest aspects of the game is the soundtrack, which has been produced in-house by some chap from a band called Sad Café with help from the saxophone player from *M-People*. We've heard the music score in the office, and it's sounds pretty funky. Honest.

In development for the past 18 months, it's now very close to completion and will be featuring in *Play* very soon.



▼ *Johnny Bazookatone*: One of the most colourful PlayStation games we've seen to date. Smart.



▲ *Johnny Bazookatone*: He's a Rock 'n' Roll star!



DefCon 5 looms

Millennium Interactive's new hi-tech game about corporate warfare, *DefCon 5*, is just about finished. The game is being published by Sony Interactive, and boy do they come down here enough to show it off. From the last look we had, it looks rather exciting.

The plot involves defending one of the Tyron Corporation's Weapons Division's outposts from alien attack. However, all is not quite right on the outpost, and the odds are somewhat stacked against you.

With a very immersive storyline, and some real heart-pounding action, *DefCon 5* looks like it could be a mega hit. With any luck, we'll be bringing you the full low-down on *DefCon 5* next month.



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Striker '96 is multi-tap game shock

Unbeknownst to us at the time of the review, but *Striker '96* is actually multi-tap compatible. Sorry, but at the time we were under the impression that Sony was going to make damn sure its forthcoming *Total NBA '96* would be the first commercially-available multi-compatible game. The multi-tap device, by the way, allows up to four people to play a game simultaneously on one PlayStation, or eight people with two machines linked up. Only developers have got them at the moment, so, obviously we weren't able to test the game for this facility. *Striker '96* developer Rage kindly offered us a loan of their unit to try it out, and we've now decided to upgrade the score for our current-fave footy game to a stonking 91%.

And, by the way, what the hell was that review in (RayStation Pus - ed) all about? All you do is whack the ball up the field and smack it in the corner my arse. Play it for a while and you'll notice that the control system allows you to set up passes in advance of receiving the ball, so you can set up some pretty nifty one touch passing. And our lot beat your lot 23-2 at *International Superstar Soccer*. So you know nowt about footy, people.

Ad watchdog conquers Virgin

Virgin's recent advertisement campaign for the PC game *Command & Conquer*, was recently censored following complaints upheld by the Advertising Standards Authority. The game, a cerebrally-challenging strategic war-simulation, used headshots of infamous and notorious political and military figures including such celebrated dictators as Hitler, Jacques Chirac and General Ratko Mladic, to advertise the game with the slogan 'PREVIOUS HIGH SCORES'.

Why are we bothered? Well apart from the fact that Jacques Chirac has forced Virgin to cover-up his picture (maybe it was a bad likeness or maybe it had something to do with the nuclear mushroom cloud behind his head), we've heard whispers that this devilish game will be appearing on the PlayStation sometime next year. No doubt Jacques will abstain from actually buying a copy...

Time Commando

Described as a 'classic 3D platform game with state-of-the-art 3D animated sets and characters', *Time Commando* is the forthcoming arcade-adventure game from Electronic Arts. Inspired by the classic game *Commando*, *Time Commando* takes you into a future world where computers, running at light speed, are no longer fast enough. The solution is to locate the computer core in other dimensions where time, and hence light speed and ultimately the computer, runs faster.

As an improbable hero, an ordinary computer repair man gets trapped in some strange temporal time thingy, and well, you are that man and your mission is to travel through space and time to get to the computer core before anything nasty happens. The game is set over ten different time zones, from prehistoric to Samurai ruled Japan, and contains an assortment of weapons and characters to encounter.

Time Commando is scheduled for release in February '96. For now.

Shocking Elite after Onside verdict

News has emerged from deepest Birmingham of two new forthcoming PlayStation releases. The first, *Onside*, is a football game that combines elements of arcade football action, and a management side to exert your expertise in making tactical decisions in transfers, training and more.

Featuring multiple camera angles an extensive range of other features, *Onside* is being developed by the lead programmer responsible for the concept of the rather good original *Striker*. Publisher of the moment Telstar has already moved in to sign up the publishing rights.



The second game we've heard about is *Aftershock*, a 3D helicopter shoot 'em-up combining elements of frantic arcade action and strategic manoeuvres. *Aftershock* is to feature including multiple weapons, texture-mapped helicopters and glorious 3D graphics, and also a two-player option that can be played head-to-head or co-operatively.

Both games have been developed by Elite subsidiary Motivetime and both are set for release during the 1st quarter of 1996. Yeah, right.



▲ With top titles such as *Air Combat*, *Warhawk* and *Aftershock*, the PlayStation's flying high!

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LONE SOLDIER



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"...blows the roof off the 'Doom' genre"

Rated: 92%

PLAY 

"Pure arcade frenzy over a massive variety of levels, combining pumping 3D action and awesome firepower. This is exactly what we want."

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(Tel)Star Fighter 3000 bursts into view

Set in the year 3037, where television is a no-holds-barred kinda entertainment medium, *Star Fighter 3000* involves you playing squadron leader in a real-life televised battle. In *Star Fighter* you must undertake various missions, but also tactically control the rest of your fleet to enable you to execute your adventurous manoeuvres successfully.

Star Fighter 3000 is being developed by Krisalis Software for Telstar Electronic Studios (publishers of *Lone Soldier*, reviewed on pages 20-23) and is scheduled for release sometime during Spring next year.

FIFA '96 here next month! No, really this time!

I know, I know we said it was going to be ready this month. Well, that's what we'd been promised, anyway. Production delays have held it up and we wanted to make sure we reviewed the absolutely final version, so we'll be reviewing it next month. It's still got multiple viewpoints, and a full, actually quite good, commentary by John Motson, and we're still looking forward to reviewing it.

Bullfrog carpeted on the PlayStation

Magic Carpet, the much-anticipated cross-over from PC by Bullfrog Productions is to be miles bigger than the original. Other versions of the game came with 50 levels to complete, and had a data-disc, *Hidden Worlds*, to add another 25. The PlayStation version boasts the full complement of 75 levels in one package. Top stuff Bullfrog! It's supposedly going to be ready by 31st March 1996, priced at £44.99, but the way releases are going at the moment, we'll believe it when it happens.



Myst clears for Sony Interactive

Described as "a festival of ambience, with graphics so visually stunning they redefine the entire concept of videogaming" *Myst* is the forthcoming puzzle/adventure/exploration game from Sony Interactive.

"*Myst*" is actually a book, which when read, transports the reader into what is the magical world of *Myst*. The game takes you on a trip into a hazy world of mysticism and intrigue where you must explore the land and delve into the story of the island that is *Myst*, to find out the truth about why you have been summoned there. On other platforms people have either loved it or hated it, so it'll be interesting to see what the PlayStation version's like. It's (currently) set for release on 24th January 1996.



The incredible Space Hulk II

Avast err... hulk is hurtling towards the Imperial Planet Delvar III. This hulksome hulk-thing must be boarded and somehow diverted from its current apocalyptic course in order to save the planet from certain destruction. As the leader of the Blood Angel Chapter of Imperial Space Marines, it is your lucky day! You've been assigned the task to battle the hulk's occupiers, the Genestealers, in order to shut down its engines and prevent the destruction of your civilisation. Yup... *Space Hulk II* is coming to the PlayStation.

Space Hulk II is an advanced Doom-style game, with a fully immersive 3D environment. The game is a creation based on the Games Workshop cult. Combining elements involving strategy, arcade-action and adventure, *Space Hulk II* should be a game to look forward to. The PlayStation version should be released sometime during the first quarter '96.



Marubeni gives it some stick

Fed up with the standard control pad for your PlayStation? Marubeni Sanki have released details of two new control devices specially designed for fast fighting combat games. The first pad, the *2 Way Fighting Commander*, has an arcade style button placement, with two mapping options to allow flexibility between different games. The pad is set to retail at £21.99.

The other controller, named *Fighting Stick PS*, is a proper arcade style joystick system almost as large as the PlayStation itself. This beast of a joystick is specially designed for real arcade-freaks that love bashing away when playing games. The *Fighting Stick* is set to retail at £44.99.

Not so Agile Warrior slips to '96



Virgin Interactive Entertainment's *Agile Warrior* has been delayed. So in the meantime we thought we'd show you some screenshots. Those with short

memories might not remember last issue's news piece describing the game as a flight simulator with much more of a plot than most. It's now due early next year.



Company Vitae



ouldn't it be nice never to get ripped off by a software house? For all games to have been properly invested in, released without being rushed and over priced? Those the words that kick off this column with every month, just so you know the score. At *Play* we're doing our bit to keep corporate UK honest. We'll air the soiled laundry if it needs it.

Corporate File 2 - Electronic Arts

Name: Electronic Arts

Age: 13

Mission Statement: Nah, too hippy for that

Electronic Arts? That's a bit of poncey name for a games firm, isn't it?

"Where have you been? These days, whenever you splash out £40 of your hard-earned on the latest next big thing, you're not buying a game, you're acquiring a slice of interactive entertainment."

Interactive entertainment! I thought that was something you find on a newsagent's top shelf?

"That's not the half of it, get this, the firm calls its programmers 'artists', although you might expect that from a firm founded by somebody called 'Trip' Hawkins"

Trip? As in LSD? What is he, a hippy?

"*Play* couldn't possibly comment. But he did jack in his job as boss of a successful multi, multi-million dollar grossing publisher to chase some dream of creating a universal gaming standard that would feature all the latest hardware components which all the developers would love and then devote all their creative energy to producing the best games ever for. Did it work?

"He set up 3Do."

Ah.

"Yes, it was a nice idea, but never that likely in the Japanese billion-dollar conglomerate world of video games hardware. Especially when your games console costs twice as much as theirs.

Trip's gone from running a software firm making multi-million dollar profits to a hardware firm which recently reported multi-million dollar losses. And all in a few short years."

Ouch. But what about Electronic Arts? How've they got on without this Svengali figure?

"Well they made \$55.7 million last year from major hits such as *FIFA International Soccer*, *FIFA '95*, *Madden '95*, *NHL Live '95*, *Wing Commander III*, *Magic Carpet*, *Little Big Adventure* and *Theme Park*, and were wise enough to buy two of the best developers in the industry (the multi-ECTS award winning Bullfrog and Origin), so they must know what they're doing. Actually, in our view, they've been the undisputed number one games publisher in the UK for at least the last few years. Mind you, there has been some dispute over their top dog status lately."

Go on.

"Well a recent report from a city analyst said that Virgin, the firm we did last month, has just overtaken them sales-wise.

Bet they didn't like that.

"Not much. EA's man in Europe, David Gardner, rang up the games industry newspaper *CTW* to complain when it ran a story on the report. Basically his line was 'Shucks, that just ain't so, We're number one! We're number one! He is American after all.'

So, who's the best then, EA or Virgin?

"Ouch. We have to talk to these people you know.

Answer the question!

"OK, OK. (deep breath) Well, on the PlayStation, so far, neither. *Wipeout*-publishers Sony Interactive have stolen a march on the rest of the major-league players. Virgin and EA haven't really got going yet.

But there's lots to come yeah?

"Too right! The Bullfrog-designed *Theme Park*, as well as the PlayStation version of smash Neo Geo classic *Viewpoint*, are now just about in the shops and joining them over the next few months will be the likes of *FIFA Soccer '96*, *Wing Commander III*, *NHL '96*, *Madden '96*, *Road Rash*, *Space Hulk*, *The Darkening*, *Hi-Octane*, *Syndicate Wars* and *Magic Carpet*. Not bad, eh?

So, is it a brand name you can trust?

If it's a sports game, or sub-branded with the legend Bullfrog or Origin then definitely, otherwise... maybe.

Most likely to

"Release (fill in blank) '97 in time for Christmas next year."

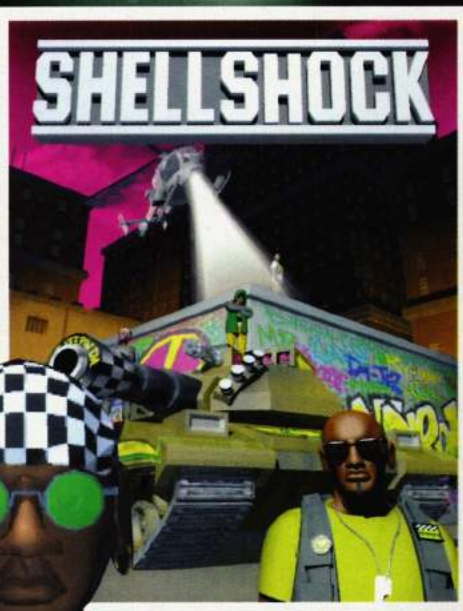
Least likely to

"Win multi-ECTS awards with non-Bullfrog designed games"

Shellshocked to the core

Way up there in Derby (hey, we're in Bournemouth), Core Design is working on a couple of hot PlayStation projects. *Shellshock* "ain't nothing but a tank game", apparently, where you take control of an awesome tank and have to rid the city of the urban decay that is slowly eroding the lives of your fellow people. Sounds good.

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 is a new helicopter game being developed for the PlayStation. The game is the sequel to the (spit) Mega-CD hit, *Thunderhawk*, hence the name, and takes you on an arcade flight into the world of SAMs, AMRAAMs and other unpronounceable acronyms. Claimed to have groundbreaking 3D scaling, with multiple camera angles, in-game speech and a thumping rock soundtrack, *Thunderhawk 2* sound like it might just be rather good. Both *Shellshock* and *Thunderhawk 2* should be ready for review next ish. Hopefully.



US Gold plays around



Yeah, it's golf, but it looks rather special at the moment and US Gold have now nearly finished *World Cup Golf*. It looks pretty good, has some very well drawn pitch graphics and an arcade-style control system and also features some very informative commentary on each of the holes, with handy tips for play. Everything is controllable, from the golfer's stance to ball-spin and the swing gauge even has a percentage marker that can be used to help you hit the ball at the correct pace. The game is based on the Hyatt Dorado Beach course in Puerto Rico, and contains Silicon Graphics rendered fly-by sequences and stills. *World Cup Golf* should be available in time for Christmas and reviewed next ish.



EA and Origin go on Military Manoeuvres

Electronic Arts and Origin have announced an alliance with Jane's, the military publishing giant. Jane's Information Group is well known for its reference books on all things military, including aircraft, artillery and armour. EA and Origin will have access to Jane's awesome library of information for five years through their contract, and will be producing authentic simulation titles under the new brand name, Jane's Combat Simulations.

Origin's Andy Hollis, and EA's Paul Grace will be two of the first developers making use of the military archive. Between them, they are responsible for games such as *Gunship*, *F19 Stealth Fighter*, *F/A-18 Interceptor* and *688 Attack Sub*. The alliance should provide them with information to make their latest projects, Hollis' *AH-64D Longbow* and Grace's *Advanced Tactical Fighters*, and future projects the ultimate in military and combat games, with real military data. Look forward to some real action soon.

Interplay goes virtual



VR Sports is the new sporty label from Interplay Productions. "At VR

Sports, we take sports gaming seriously," said Curtis Broome, VR Sports' Marketing Director. (unlike everybody else with a sports label we presume). Their first release will be VR Baseball '96, a real 3D game using motion-captured players for the ultimate in realism. The teams are real, the players are real, the statistics are real. The play takes place in a 360° 'Virtual Fieldvision' that supposedly immerses the player right in the action. Interplay claims that VR Baseball '96 should be the closest experience to the real thing you can play on a console. We'll see.



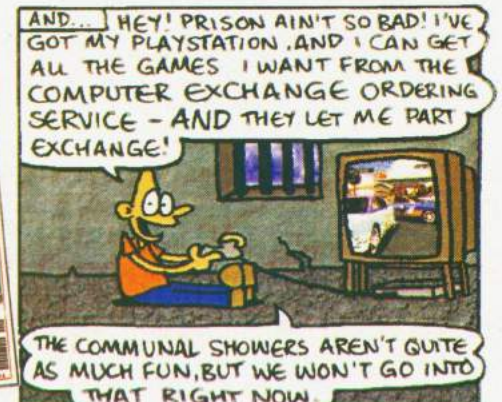
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PlayStation Games

This is the main bulk of our magazine. The pages you've been waiting for. The games, the whole games, and nothing but the games. This section is broken into two main categories.

Workstations

If you bought Issue One you'll have noticed that **Play** is not stuffed full of space-filling previews. In fact, our policy is exactly the opposite. Instead of trying to cover everything parrot fashion, we believe in quality not quantity. Therefore only the biggest up and coming releases are spotlighted in our WorkStations for early attention. First screenshots, artworks, even behind-the-scenes chats with the development teams, ensure that our readers receive the most informative and comprehensive looks at the next big PlayStation games.

Guaranteed!

This month's promising new kids on the block are:

NHL '96/
Madden '96

24

Waterworld

28

Doom

38

Krazy Ivan

54

Tilt

64

Evaluation Station

The most important and brutal section of the magazine, where finished games are put through their paces by our team of PlayStation pros. At the end of each review every title will receive a totally honest and unbiased **Played** rating. And believe me, we don't pull any punches. As we've said before, the only people we answer to are you.

Guide to the Grades

In **Play**, games are rated on looks, sounds and also value for money. Any game priced at more than £40 had better make sure it delivers big-time or we'll want to know why not. The writer will also add an extra category, particular to that game. Some of these will be fun, some may give an important hint at a particular feature of the product itself.

All of these categories are marked out of ten and are followed by the **Played** score, which is judged entirely on how much fun the game is. This is rated out of 100, and breaks down like this:-

94-100 These games are exceptional. They're fun, stay fun and are groundbreaking. They're also marked with a coveted **Play PLUS** logo.

85-93 Games we recommend. Fun, lasting, value for money, but not necessarily hugely original.

80-84 Games that maybe one member of the team would score at 85+, but the others don't really feel is worth splashing out over £40 on.

70-79 Games that are entertaining, but we don't think have lasting appeal OR games that are above average but slightly flawed.

65-70 Average games which may appeal to fans of the genre but should be avoided by everyone else.

0-64 Just not good enough.

This month's new kids on the chopping block are

Lone Soldier	20
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Total Eclipse	72
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King Bowling	74
Twinbee Deluxe	74



● Publisher: Telstar Electronic Studios
● Customer support: 01932 222232
● Expected price: £44.99
● Expected when: November 30th

So you reckon you're hard do ya? What lengths are you willing to go to prove it? Ok, never mind the bollocks, in short, are you man enough for *Lone Soldier*? Ryan Butt's up for it big time!

Lone Soldier



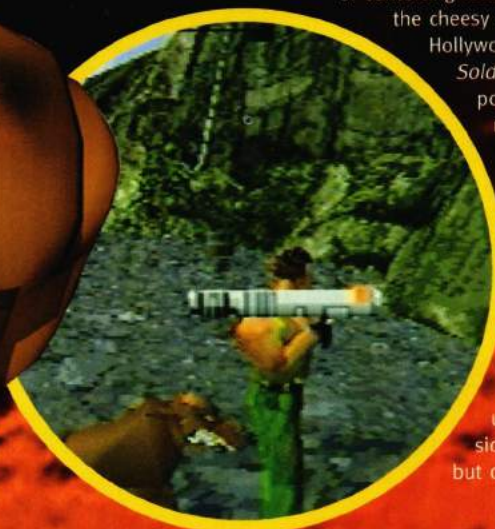
Load up your guns, fire yourself up and pump unlimited rounds of ammo into lecherous scum that threaten our livelihood. A promising scenario? We think so, and as chance would have it, that's exactly what you get to do in Telstar's very first PlayStation outing.

In *Lone Soldier* you decide the fate of a strapping, muscle-bound squaddie that looks as though he could take on a whole battalion... and win. He has been personally selected by the US government to track down a

nuclear missile seized by a band of merciless bounty hunters aided by beings from another planet. Oooo-kay, sounds reasonable enough.

These gangsters aren't your usual Sunday afternoon ram-raiders though – they've lodged themselves safely behind twenty levels-worth of trigger happy soldiers complete with big guns, tanks, helicopters, boats, and heavy duty lorries – they mean business. Let's be honest, not even Rambo, Arnie, Van Damme and Steven bloody Seagal put together would be able to infiltrate this lot. However, games have a nasty habit of contorting feasibility to rival even the cheesy standards set by

Hollywood, and so in *Lone Soldier* anything is possible. Can your thick-necked jock take a torrent of bazooka missiles without even swaggering? Sure. Can he run through battle-fields which make the Somme and Sarajevo look like a school playground, and still emerge unscathed at the other side? You betcha! Yes, but can he infiltrate an





Soldier

alien space craft, wipe the savage extra terrestrials out in one foul swoop and still return to Earth in time for a cup of tea and a slice of cake? Of course he can, do you know why? Simple, this is the nineties equivalent to the classic coin-op, *Commando*, and it's destined to become somewhat of a classic.

Set in a picturesque (at least until you arrive it is) 3D landscape of forests, rocky roads and mean city streets. *Lone Soldier* fires you up with some brilliant rendered

► Don't ask us why the chiselled-jawed jock is stopping a train, but this is one of the many FMV sequences.



▼ In *Lone Soldier*, if it moves, destroy it, that boat is no exception.



Big guns

With four hefty killing devices at your disposal, plus a healthy stash of grenades, no one can accuse your soldier of being unprepared. Here is his arsenal in full:

Uzi
This is your standard weapon. It has unlimited bullets and can pick targets off from some considerable distance.



Rocket Launcher
Unbeatable at long-range obliteration, some line it up, pull the trigger, and watch them fireworks fly in the distance.



Flame Thrower
Its range is limited, but by holding the button and spinning around, this will torch everything in the area. Bring marshmallows campers!



Assault Rifle
Slightly better than the Uzi in power and effectiveness, watch those bodies drop teeny bands as you dish out the justice!



Power ups

Here are some of the crates which drop down into the game via parachutes during your mission. Some will give you extra ammo for a particular weapon, and others will simply make you feel like a million bucks again.

Extra Flame



Extra Granades



Extra Health



Extra Rockets



Full Health



FMV and then quite literally chucks you into the thick of it with guns blazing, sweat dripping and teeth chattering (pull yourself together man!).

A 3D version of *Commando* is one way of describing the turbo charged gameplay, but if you had a deprived childhood and missed out on the phenomenal experience that was *Commando*, let me put it another way. Your chunky soldier, high as he stands, walks into the level, kind of like *Ridge Racer* on foot. Keeping to the beaten track of a stony path that twists, turns, rises, sinks and splits, you're constantly bugged by a barrage of psycho soldiers, rabid dogs, and a wealth of heavy-duty vehicles that can only be stopped by a couple of rockets somewhere you wouldn't want to discuss with Grandma!

As standard, your tight high ranks only issued you

with an Uzi for defence and debauchery, but as you rip through the canyons offing squaddies and laughing insanely at the blood-curdling screams coming from torched tanks, you can find bazookas, flame throwers and assault rifles laying idle begging to be used.

These only last for a limit period though, so you must use the ammo sparingly – and for gawd's sake don't face any of the bosses without them!

With a scenario as simple yet so utterly compelling as this, there's no way you could go wrong, and Telstar know it. OK so maybe a split-screen two player game would have gone down a storm – but then again *Lone Soldier And His Mate* doesn't sound the same, does it?

This is exactly what the PlayStation needed. We were getting a little worried by the endless stream of racing, fighting and sports games landing on our desk – what happened to good old mindless violence? This correspondent is happy to report that on the maiming-front *Lone Soldier* more than delivers the goods. It also boasts graphics that blows most 32-bit software away. Speaking of which, this is a game that will really get the heads turning and the tongues wagging. The real beauty is the animation, your G.I. Joe struts around like a good 'un, and can break into a run with the push of a button. Everything moves so smoothly and the perspective is constantly swaying to and fro. The visual effects as you scale hills and dash down slopes makes for riveting viewing – just make sure you keep a cup handy to collect the dripping dribble.

The sound effects add to the atmosphere by incorporating agonising groans, amusing speech ("Ahh ya got me!"), and dodgy panting, that is if the constant drone of psychotic gun-fire doesn't drown them out. Usually the danger with games such as this is that due to the repetitive nature, you often find that boredom sets in after a few days play. In *Lone Soldier's* defence I can only say that we were playing this none stop since it arrived (late!) in the office, and being the malicious squad of sadists that we are, there was certainly no sign of us getting fed-up. It may just be a 3D scrolling

Poetry in motion

We did say that *Lone Soldier* had a high content of glamorous full motion video, here's some of the best bits:



► "Dance punk!" The red ninja poops his pants as the man with no name engages in a playful mood whilst brandishing a flame thrower.



◀ "Excuse me mate... have you got a light?" Famous last words from the naive boat patrol!



shoot 'em-up, but the terrain's vary so much in style and content that you'll constantly keep bagging bad guys just to see where the action switches to next. I personally thought that the alien twist was a bit too much for sane gamesplayers to take in, and seeing your bloke strutting around a flying saucer offering a varied mix of Martians was a bit hard to stomach. Don't let this bad Dynasty-style sub plot put you off though, this is a class title which is frighteningly hard, genuinely fun, and when the initial acrid smoke clears, still leaves a game and a half standing.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ██████████
Sounds: ██████████
Body Count: ██████████
Value: ██████████

Played 92%

You'll never walk alone

Nutty tossers from hell

Lone Soldier is all about a gang of ruthless psychos that have pinched a US missile, and are threatening the world if certain conditions are not met. Here they are, and if they offer you a lift...leg it!



PLAY information

- **Design team:** High Score Entertainment and EA Advanced Technologies
- **Team leader:** Rob Martyn
- **Where at:** 60% complete
- **Target release:** *Madden '96* – December, *NHL '96* – March
- **Publisher:** EA Sports



NHL Hockey & Madden

- a match made in heaven

Just about the two longest running sports themes in video games history are about to plug into the PlayStation, and hopes are high that they'll be something special. Ryan Butt shares the general enthusiasm.

Think Mega Drive and you automatically think Madden right? How could you not? Okay so the big guy complete with robust turn and glistening white locks may not be in the same league as Sonic, but he certainly had more games to boast of (six including *Madden '96*). His is always the name that springs to mind when searching for the definitive gridiron sim – the only problem was that with each new year came a completely new game, and hence, more parting of cash for the die-hard fanatics. Can we expect more of the same? Is fat John about to try the same old trick he flogged for six years on the Mega Drive, or is PlayStation *Madden '96* going to be a one-off blaze of glory that couldn't possibly be bettered? We think perhaps that John, like the PlayStation, is going to be around for a very long time to come. Nearly as old as the proverbial hills is the less followed theme of the ever-

evolving *NHL Hockey* series. As gaming veterans may recall, this saga began again on the Mega Drive back in 1991 with a very quaint, but highly playable game called *EA Hockey*. It was, and still is, the best of the bunch in my opinion as it featured nothing but hard-core goal-slotting, player-maiming action, and wasn't bogged down with stats and superfluous extensions.

However, the wind of change has swept through the games industry like one of Bernard Manning's farts, and inevitably, both games are in for the re-hashed treatment as they stand-up, brush themselves down, and prepare to stroll out into the PlayStation spot-light for the very first time.

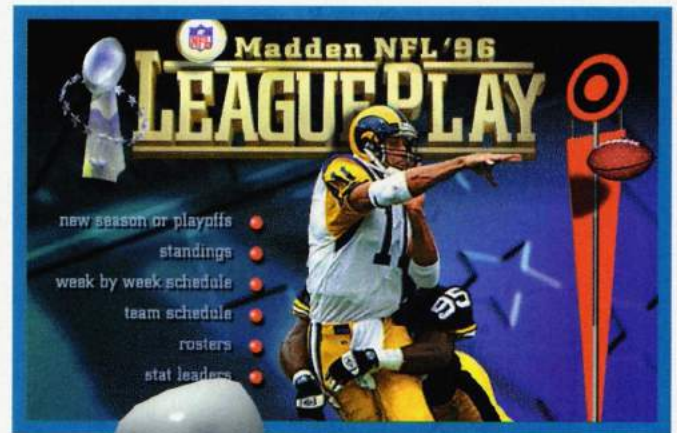
Getting away with it

Before we put *Madden '96* and *NHL '96* under the microscope, we wanted to know exactly what EA were entitled to

after pitching for the various licences attached and forking out loads of sponds for the pleasure. For this information we spoke to Clive Downie at Electronic Arts UK who was only too happy to fill us in. "The *Madden* product involves a lot of licences including John Madden himself, the NFL, NFLPA (the player's association), NFL films and an agreement with Fox TV which allows us to utilise their presenters and program format. This ensures an authentic broadcast feel to the product – in fact it has even been referred to as an 'Interactive Sunday Afternoon'". Quite!

Clive went on to say: "John Madden is personally involved in the design of the game. He is one of the definitive authorities on American Football – having been a professional coach. He assists the team with play strategies and team movement – ensuring that the artificial intelligence simulates the sport in the most realistic way."

- That's Jim Everett that is, I think he plays for New Orleans now though.
- The Montreal Canadiens stand around having a chat, tiring game Ice Hockey.
- ▼ At the end of the day, it's still all about getting the puck in the back of the net.



ay
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ven?



The History of NHL Games

Following hot on the heels of Madden in terms of longevity comes the faithful troop of EA hockey sims. Here is the complete collection:

Game Name	System	Date of Release
EA Hockey	Mega Drive	1991
NHLPA '93	Mega Drive	1992
NHLPA '93	SNES	1992
NHL '94	Mega Drive	1993
NHL '94	SNES	1993
NHL Hockey	PC	1993
NHL '95	Mega Drive	1994
NHL '95	SNES	1994
NHL '95	Game Gear	1994
NHL '95	PC-CD	1994
NHL '96	Mega Drive	1995
NHL '96	SNES	1995
NHL '96	Saturn	1995
NHL '96	3DO	1995
NHL '96	PC-CD	1995
NHL '96	PlayStation	1996



▲ This is the first one of the *NHL* series to adopt the *FIFA*-style 3D isometric viewpoint. It's smart, isn't it?

▼ *NHL* on PlayStation is still at an early stage, with work continuing on the modelling. Here the team have been morphing a seal into a goalie.



Basically, the NFL licence allows EA Sports to use real team names such as the Dallas Cowboys, Miami Dolphins etc. and well as the team logos. The NFLPA licence allows them to use real player names and likenesses, and the NFL Film licence gives the company unlimited access to the complete archives of NFL footage over the years – which has been used to create the full motion video sequences that run in the product. Could you ever imagine so much paper work being involved in a game?!

NHL '96 is slightly less involved. To create this, all EA Sports needed was the NHL and NHLPA licences.

Clive then went on to boastfully say "All these are licensed by EA Sports from the respective leagues. At the end of the day they won't give their licence to a company that won't do it justice." History just about bears him out.

Great Expectations

So just what can the bright-eyed gaming public expect from the '96 versions of EA's ageing flagships? Virtual Stadium technology, that's what. This gives the player a full representation of the action anywhere on the rink, pitch, field or whatever, you're there in the thick of it with the best seat in the house. Action that lets you play from any angle be it down on the sideline, up in the air, from the corner, in the blinkin' Royal box – you name it, you can be there with your popcorn and tacky baseball cap chanting cliched chant upon cliched chant.

The players themselves have all been motion captured to get the best movement possible, that looks even better than the real thing – presumably

EA Sports had to make the best possible use of their expensive NFLPA and NHLPA licences to avoid a severe grilling by the head honchos!

This makes for truly mind-blowing realism that doesn't necessarily have to be played, you can just sit back and imagine that you're actually there taking in game or two (although for added realism you have to invite a friend to dig their shoes in your back and catch the squirts off a dodgy hot-dog!)

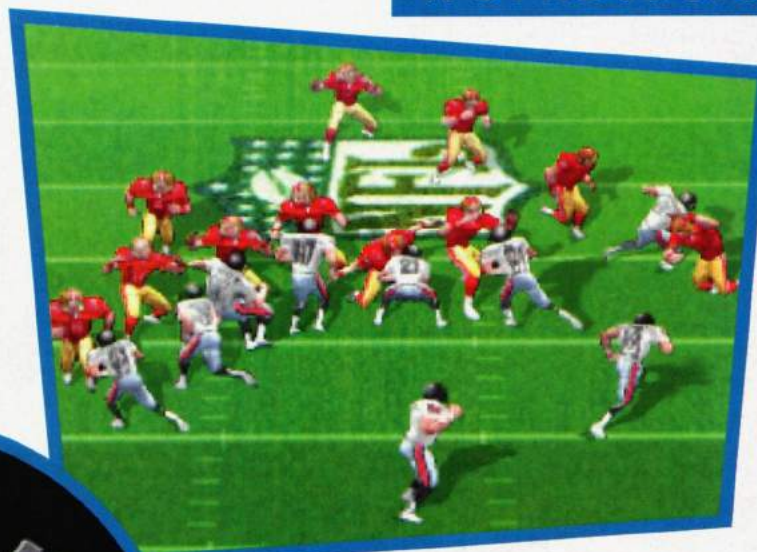
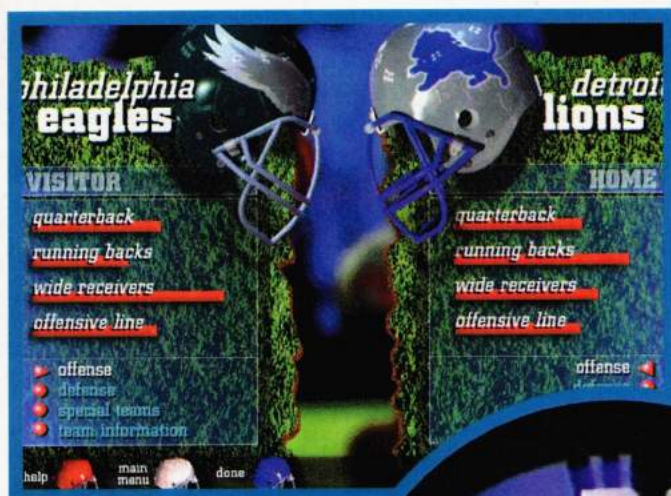
Madden '96 looks set to stand at the pinnacle of PlayStation gridiron games due to its sheer depth. After all, Acclaim's *NFL Quarterback Club* boasts many of Madden's impressive features, but, according to EA, only *Madden '96* will let you play through an entire season if you should so wish (and live that long!). Its TV-style approach and commentary will also make it appeal more to the goons that thrive on Americanism.

NHL '96 also comes with a hamper full of enhancements. As well as the aforementioned views it has player shadows and reflections in the ice, logos chucked all over the shop to brighten things up, plus copious amounts of stats to take in and spew out. The difficulty level has also been enhanced beyond belief to make the whole affair more challenging to the average hockey nut.

Change or die

When interrogated on whether or not the PlayStation versions of both games would offer players elements that other systems wouldn't, Clive democratically stated that "The PlayStation version utilises the unique powers and features of the PlayStation. As does the PC CD version and all the other versions. Neither are better than the other ones – all fulfil our goal of getting the best ice-hockey game from that particular format." Yeah, right, is what we say to that.





▲ Not bad! This is going to be the best animated, sexiest, toughest and roughest version of *Madden* yet. And it's ours.



Team Schedule

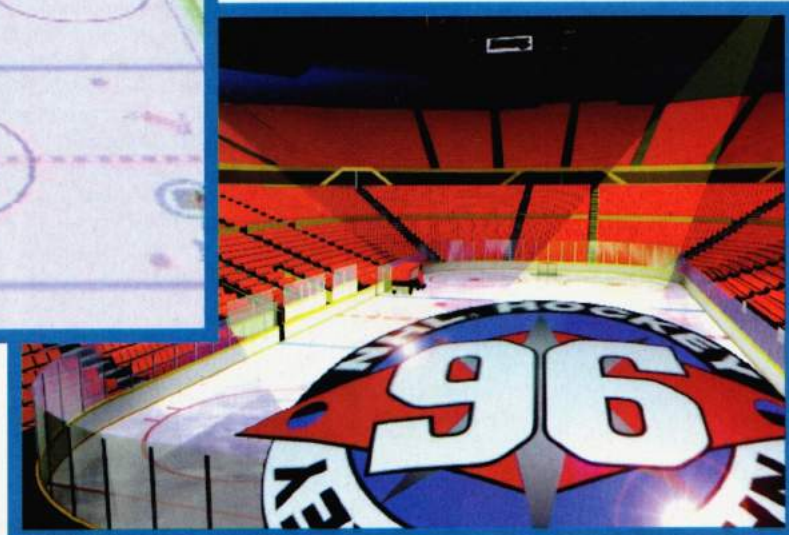
west	central	east	west	central	east
49ers	bears	cardinals	broncos	bengals	bills
falcons	buccaneers	cowboys	chargers	browns	colts
panthers	lions	eagles	chiefs	jaguars	dolphins
rams	packers	giants	raiders	oilers	jets
saints	vikings	redskins	seahawks	steelers	patriots

I suppose a multitude of different playing angles is in no way superior to just the one bog standard view offered by the lowly Mega Drive!

For future versions of the *Madden* and *NHL* games, EA Sports are looking into what it is about sport that makes people tick. Thriving to enhance the passion and emotion of major sporting events in video games. "We can simulate what's happening down on the field – but we want to be able to do it so well that the player/viewer feels a part of the sport – even down to feeling totally devastated on losing or elated when winning". Come down to the *Play* office and you'll see these emotions running wild frequently during our late night *Striker '96* sessions!

As both games near completion for their respective release dates

Play can't help but feel a certain sadness. The familiar styles that both games have adopted for so long on their 16-bit reign will be but a distant memory when we clap eyes on the innovative new styles incorporated into the PlayStation versions. Oh sod it, we're not scared of change, let us at 'em! Now!



▲ A virtually empty virtual stadium, well, a totally empty virtual stadium actually, it looks absolutely drop dead gorgeous. Check out those lights!

The History of Madden Games

Madden games have been around for nearly as long as the great man has been on this planet (sort of), so where did the ball start rolling?

Game Name	System	Date of Release
John Madden Football	PC	1989
John Madden Football	Mega Drive	1990
Madden '92	Mega Drive	1991
Madden '93	Mega Drive	1992
Madden '94	Mega Drive	1993
Madden '94	SNES	1993
Madden NFL Football	3Do	1994
Madden NFL '95	Mega Drive	1994
Madden NFL '95	SNES	1994
Madden NFL '95	Game Gear	1994
Madden NFL '95	Game Boy	1994
Madden NFL '96	Mega Drive	1995
Madden NFL '96	SNES	1995
Madden NFL '96	PC CD	1995
Madden NFL '96	PlayStation	1995

Waterw

Kevin Costner's *Waterworld* is the most expensive movie ever to be produced. Depicting a future where the Earth has been drowned by melted water from the polar ice caps, the film portrays a bleak prospect of existence on constructed land-masses, strewn over barren waters. Asam Ahmad goes hunting for some aquatic action, and takes a trip to *Waterworld* courtesy of the PlayStation.

For those of you who haven't seen the film (or even have, but fell asleep), here's the plot, and indeed the basis for the game. Set in the future where the world has degenerated into a state of depraved existence, the two most valuable commodities left on Earth are dirt (yes – soil, mud, turf, call it what you will) and fresh drinking water. As food is scarce, the demand for land and water to grow produce on is incredibly high – so high, people are killing for it.

You take the role of the Mariner (Kevin Costner), well for most of the time anyway, and have to navigate yourself through the different levels (based on actual film scenes) and thwart the plans of the crazed villains in their attempts to control the dirt and water. Played in first person perspective, there is little to think about in this game, all you have to do is to kill all the baddies that appear on your screen before they kill you. To this end, from first impressions, *Waterworld* is already looking like one of the best shoot 'em-ups of this genre, at least in the visuals department.

Waterworld was an ambitious project for the cinema screen, and anyone who's seen the film will be able to see where all the money went in its production – the effects, scenery and all that bloody water!

Imagine if they'd been filming the movie in Yorkshire...

As you might imagine, an act like this is a hard one to follow, and particularly hard for a computer game. Indeed getting the impressive visuals just right has been the hardest part of creating *Waterworld* the game, asserts Carleton Handley, lead PlayStation programmer for Software Creations.

Wet Dreams

The project started about a year ago, when Interplay decided to contract the job to Software Creations, now famous for being signed up as part of the Nintendo Ultra 64 development 'Dream Team' based in Manchester. At this stage, the team had very little to work with, especially since the film hadn't even been completed. "It was difficult to start with – we didn't have much in the way of images to base the graphics on, just a couple of pictures and the blueprints for the atolls, but we managed to come up with some superb visuals that reflect the film's grim vision of watery wasteland very well," remarks Carleton.

As its current stage, nearly all of the game's levels have been converted from Silicon Graphics to PlayStation format, but there is still a hell of a lot of data to transfer. Within the game, in order to keep to the cinematic feel of the film, there are several full-motion video clips interspersed throughout the game. "In total, there are around 100,000 frames of rendered animation in the game, and translating and compressing all this data, at around 1Mb a frame, to the PlayStation has been one of the biggest hurdles. "At 25 frames per second, that works out to an hour of video footage! The most agonising part, though, has been the rendering process," says Carleton wearily,



"I think we've actually improved *Waterworld* from the original specifications we were given"
Lorranine Starr, Software Creations.

world

"the biggest level, the one we are working on, took around two months to render on the SGIs. The worst part of it is finding out something is not quite right and having to do the whole bloody thing again!" Not a task I would care to relish, personally.

"Apart from the video sequences, we had problems attaching the 2D sprite-based game action to the moving rendered 3D backdrops," he continues. Within the game there are several different types of enemy and all have different animation and characteristics. "We've just about managed it now, so that the overlayed graphics blend into the background as best they can without looking like they've been pasted on," he beams. "It was also quite hard to get the water to look realistic, in its motion and the way looks on the screen," Carleton qualifies to my greening complexion, "but I think we just about got it right." I think so.

With most of the visuals in place, and a film-style dramatic music score put together with the help of Manchester's acclaimed Hallé orchestra, *Waterworld* is now just about at the playtesting stage. From what we have seen so far, and as you will be able to see from the shots on the page, the attention to detail on the graphics front, is second to none. "I think we've actually improved *Waterworld* from the original

specifications we were given," claims Lorraine Starr, *Waterworld*'s project leader for Software Creations, "with all the effort we've put in to get the game feeling just right."

As the final stages of the game's creation come together, *Waterworld* is, admittedly, looking rather good, and through the next three months or so, the game will be going through the playtesting stages to sort out all those annoying little idiosyncrasies that are inevitable at this stage. Indeed once this has been finalised and everything put together, it looks like we may have a neat little game on the watery horizon.

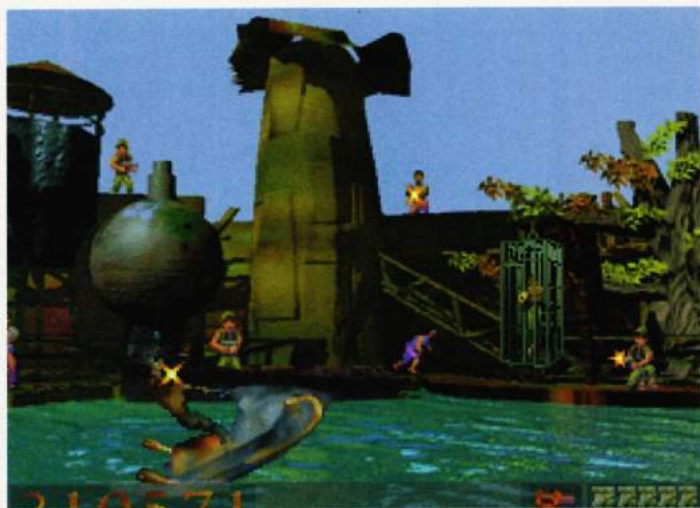
► The attention to detail in the graphics is superb.

▼ In line with the movie, *Waterworld*, features some stunning scenery.



information

- Design team: Software Creations
- Team leader: Carlton Handley
- Where at: 70% complete
- Target release: March '96
- Publisher: Interplay Productions



1



2



4



3



5



6



7



8



9



In line with the film, *Waterworld* the game has a very cinematic feel to it, especially with all those lovely full motion video clips involved. Here is a little storyboard from within the game...

1

The Drifter had sneaked up on the Mariner who had just surfaced from underwater.

2

Smokers (the baddies) came out of nowhere, coming after the Drifter and Mariner.

3

Having been captured by the Smokers, the Mariner is trapped in the cage in the atoll awaiting his execution.

4

After having managed to escape the atoll, a scout plane is sent to attack the Trimaran.

5

Another Drifter finds the Trimaran, looking to do some trading.

6

The Trimaran is destroyed by Smokers who find it while the Mariner shows Helen the underwater city.

7

Gregor rescues the Mariner and Helen after seeing the smoke from the destroyed Trimaran.

8

The atollers finally find dry land after a seemingly endless journey.

9

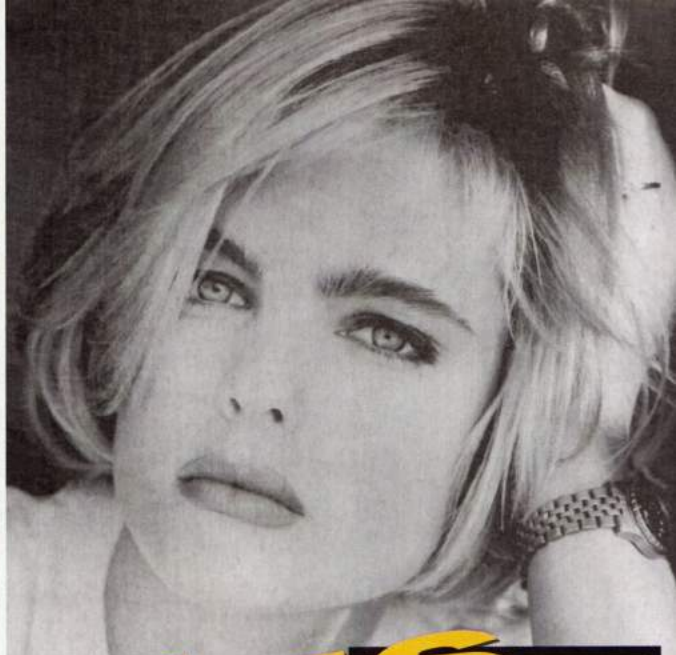
Enola (the little girl) discovers the truth about where she's from, having found her birthplace.

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What a lot of balls! Ball related games that is, and here is the latest. Ryan Butt explores this funny old game that is funnier than it should be.

PLAY information

- Publisher: Namco
- Customer Support: No UK number
- Expected price: £69.99
- Expected when: Out now



Prime

Considering that *Prime Goal Ex* was produced by the company responsible for *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken*, you'd be forgiven for expecting something a little better than this deflated pig's bladder of a game. But evidently our national sport isn't Namco's forte.

What went wrong? It looked so promising a few months ago when we were treated to an early demonstration, but now everything has gone to pot in a big way.

It isn't just one element that lets the game down either, but a combination of annoying factors that really start get on your wick after a while – the most predominant one being the awful control system. Most of the time, your players run around like headless chickens, often opting to pace around in circles rather than chase the ball. If and when they do gain possession, it just deteriorates to a mad scramble to clear the ball up field as quickly as possible – you see hanging on to it and making a break is a suicidal affair often resulting in a severe mobbing by opposing shirts.

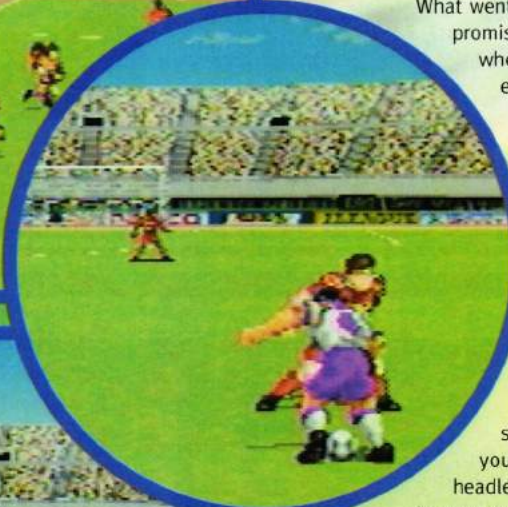
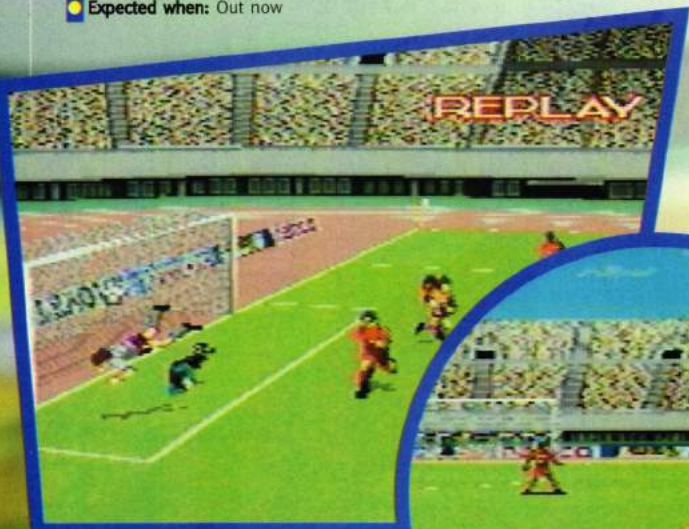
On a more positive note, if you do actually get through for a shot on goal, the wide repertoire of scoring

Goal

possibilities redeem it somewhat. No angle is impossible and the random nature of the goalies mean that you can have a crack from more or less anywhere with a fairly good chance of it going in.

Apart from the graphics, this is where the praise ends, and even they're not particularly special. The use of sprites to represent the players wouldn't be a bad thing, but these chaps are so badly drawn that at times it looks more like a hunchback charity shield than a proper competitive match.

It's a nicely presented game with the usual kooky montage of J-league related razzmatazz being rammed down your throat at every conceivable opportunity. I must stress that however much Namco expect us to get into the swing of things, that flippin' annoying post-match commentator is just too much to stomach – what the hell is he on about? He drones on about winning, losing, practising, not letting the fans down, impressing the girlies, and loads of other





Goal EX

balls in the most smarmy, patronising manner possibly imaginable. Somebody shoot him please!

Apart from being the worst football game on the PlayStation so far, *Prime Goal Ex* at least goes home with the consolation prize of being the most challenging. It offers the player several taxing tournaments to enter, and if you think you're hot stuff in them, try taking

on the rest of the mighty J-League in the actual league itself – not for the faint hearted.

It's a sad state of affairs when what was promising to be one of the best soccer games actually ends up at the foot of the pile with even Konami's basic and uninspired *Goal Storm* laughing at it. This game would have to undergo quite a significant metamorphosis to make a dent in the UK market, but personally I wouldn't bother, just send it back to the land of the rising sun from whence it came and forget all about it. Now, anyone for a game of *Striker '96*?

**Players
move
like
headless
chickens**



▲ Your storming victory makes headline news: "Roswell Alien Scores A Blinder!"

◀ Goalie scrambles are an all too common affair in *Prime Goal Ex*



PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Annoyance:
 Value:

Played 62%
The Ex should read 'Exile'

CyberSpeed

Futuristic racegames eh? Asam The Caveman wonders whether too much CyberSpeed results in cybercome down.

CyberSpeed is an action 3D racer which features combat as an integral part of the game.

Before everyone screams "Wipeout-clone", change your brain patterns (for now), as this operates on a completely different level. And it just happens to be a much simpler one.

To best hurtle around one of the ten incredibly twisty tracks included, you need to make clever use of the limited amount of speedups and weapons you're given. Do it right, finish in the top three, and you can continue onto the next track.

Apart from the standard courses, there are also some intermingled bonus tracks that are played as you progress through the championship races.

Evidently the design ploy to set this game apart from your average racer was to have your craft suspended from an energy rope. Controlling your ship this way certainly makes the game a little more interesting, as deft control is required for optimum speed, but apart from this little feature, there is little else new to master apart from learning a little strategy with your turbos and weapons.

For real speed freaks, there is a hard mode to CyberSpeed, but this just involves careering around the tracks in the opposite direction with

slightly more intelligent opponents. It doesn't really change the gameplay significantly in any way.

The difficulty curve is quite well set as you progress through the tracks, but even when you have attained a certain amount of skill, you can find yourself going from first to last position in one fell swoop as the other ships blast you out of contention. This can be incredibly frustrating, but mastering the strategy needed, does in some ways add to the longevity of the game. But, in our eyes, doesn't do much for its appeal. Graphically the game isn't up to Wipeout standards, hey the comparison does have to be made, and the visuals aren't as smooth as they should be. What is well-designed, however, are

the rendered full-motion TV adverts (CyberSpeed's plot is that it's supposed to be a kind of futuristic TV broadcast) which crop up between races. These are often funny and are well worth watching. Still, it's just eye-candy and doesn't particularly improve CyberSpeed's aftertaste.

The biggest omission from the game is a link-up option. Without this feature, the game's appeal is even more limited, and to publish a racing game without a link-up option when most others now do, is surely a big mistake.

The main problem with CyberSpeed seems to be that it is a race game which tries to be something else.

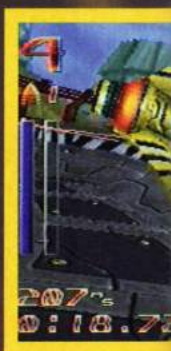
Instead of getting the gameplay right, the developers seem to have become distracted by trying to make it quirky, and different. Perhaps getting the basics right first might have been a better idea, being offbeat isn't enough.

The combat and control elements are all very well, but if anything, they detract from the racing side too much. It's not a bad little game at all, and does have its moments, but really it just isn't slick enough. If it surfaces on budget in a few months, which it probably will, then it might be worth a punt on. But if CyberSpeed costs £40, then give me the real thing any day.

It just isn't slick enough

PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Mindscape
- Customer support: 01444 239600
- Expected when: 28th November
- Price: £39.99



Speed

Ship Shape?

All the ships in *CyberSpeed* carry exactly the same weapons, a plasma bolt, which lasts indefinitely, four heat-seeking missiles and four mines. The differences between the ships is in how they handle. Here are those all important specs...

1

Craft A, Germany, Condor
T-3 M-7 Sp-7 S-5

2

Craft B, England, Cherokee
T-3 M-7 Sp-7 S-5

3

Craft C, Russia, Blocker
T-4 M-7 Sp-7 S-7

4

Craft D, USA, Eagle
T-4 M-9 Sp-9 S-7

5

Craft E, Jamaica, Vampire
T-2 M-1 Sp-5 S-4

6

Craft F, Australia, The Bat
T-2 M-3 Sp-7 S-3

7

Craft G, France, Eiffel
T-4 M-8 Sp-7 S-6

8

Craft H, Japan, AXY87 MK2
T-2 M-4 Sp-7 S-5

Key:

T=Thrust M=Mass
Sp=Speed S=Shields

PLAY verdict

Looks: 
Sounds: 
Commercials: 
Value: 

Played 65%

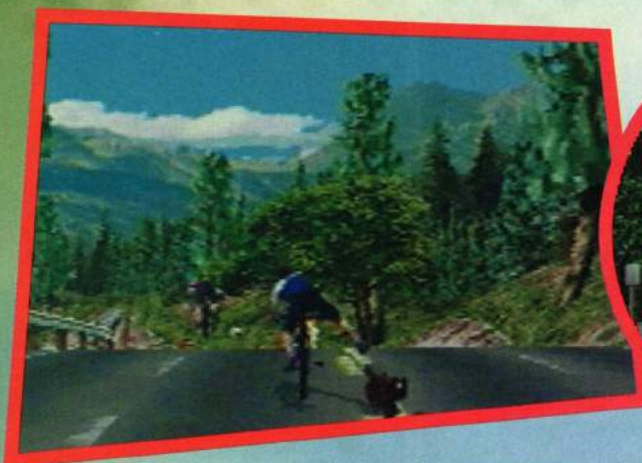
Novel idea, same old story

6

3

Road Rash on skates? Sounds ominous. We jet out to America's West to sample the latest craze that's sweeping the nation, or not as the case may be. Ryan Butt rolls with it.

ESPN EXTREME SPORTS



Racing games are meant to be competitive right? After all that's what gives the added element of sweat-dripping tension that makes the races all the more exciting. Well *ESPN Extreme Sports* reworks the familiar *Road Rash* combat racing theme and swaps the throbbing engines for skateboards, roller skates, street luges, and mountain bikes for explosive and aggressive road action that focuses on popular 'yoof' culture. Right on hipsters.

To get started, all you have to do is grab your desired mode of transport, select the game mode and then before you can say "cool, radical, bogus, max etc." you'll be rolling down some of America's most picturesque landscape with the wind in your hair and a bunch of annoying tossers hot on your heels intent on rubbing your mush in the grit.

There are two modes to play, Exhibition and Season. Exhibition is an aimless free run and the latter is a vast collection of races which have your nimble-bodied chap belting it through the collection of tracks several times for both points and some loot.

Like *Road Rash*, you'll be able to upgrade your equipment by saving your cash – better kit makes for faster times and yes, even more dosh.

The main, and about the only real attraction with this game are the graphics, you'd have to be pretty uptight not to admire the speed at which they move and the attention to detail

which helps make *ESPN*'s appearance striking. Unfortunately, everything else is way past its sell-by-date.

In an attempt to make the gameplay more involved there are a series of coloured gates littering each track which you have to try and roll through. Get the lot and you'll enter a special bonus track whereby you can boost your bank balance still further. Your player can be selected from a vast multitude of geeky-looking adolescents kitted out in trendy baggy clobber. Some are better skilled in certain areas than others, for instance dude A may be tops at skating, but pretty useless at riding and so on...

Reworks the old Road Rash theme

PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505505*
- Expected when: Late November
- Price: £39.99

The tracks of my fears

There are five different tracks in *ESPN Extreme Sports*, and they whisk you all over the world for some care-free terrorising. Here they are in full:

San Francisco

This is a rapid thrash through the busy streets of downtown San Francisco. There are trams to vault, pedestrians to hassle, and loads of oil drums and hay bails to avoid. What, don't they employ road cleaners in San Francisco or something?



Preferred mode of transport – Skateboard

Utah

It's downhill all the way as you bomb down mountain roads and at times come perilously close to toppling over the edge. Be on the lookout for abandoned tractors and kamikaze chickens that explode amidst an alarming flurry of feathers.



Preferred mode of transport – Mountain bike

Lake Tahoe

This looks like something lifted straight out of a bad Friday 13th film. Thankfully though, Jason Vorhees is nowhere to be seen as you bomb through lumberjack country. Try not to crack your head on all the toppled trees. Anyone for cherry pie?



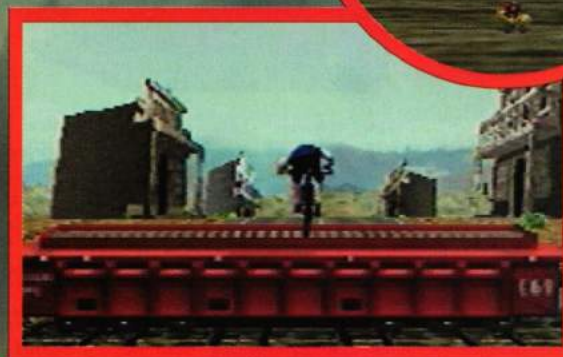
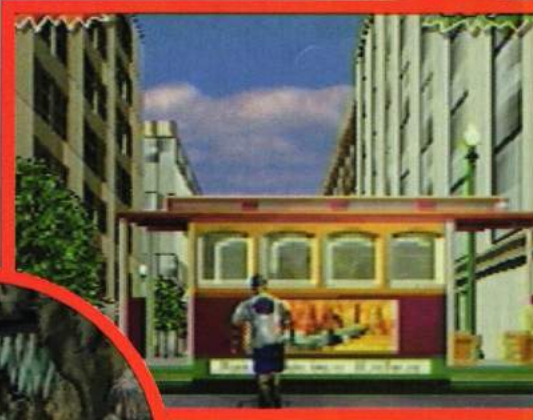
Preferred mode of transport – Roller skates

Extreme ports

Compared to *Road Rash*, this game is thankfully better equipped to handle the rigours of long term play as it is a damn sight harder than the classic motorbike game. If the other racers don't batter you into a slushy pile of pulp then the various hazards that lay strategically placed throughout the courses are guaranteed to ruin your day. These come in the form of rocks, hay bales, drums, fences, carts, trams and even trains. However, in a truly cinematic effect that at least gives this game an element of class, if you hit the ramps at a hefty velocity, you can simply fly over the troublesome obstacles and whistle off down the road without even breaking into a sweat. Can you imagine ollieing a train at high speed?!!

Other good points include the hidden routes and the witty chicken-maiming action (don't ask!), but even they won't keep you coming back to this for very long. It is tough, and it will keep you

engrossed for a while, but the whole affair eventually just gets very tedious. Indeed, once you draw close to knowing the tracks inside out, the fizz of promise gradually subsides into a stagnant, flat familiarity that you've seen, done and bought the t-shirt of before.



▲ By hitting the earlier ramp at a fair speed, you should have jumped this.

▼ Crunch! Looks like your rider is getting a bit tyre'd!

South America

Booby traps and temples are the order of the day here. Be sure to trigger the secret doors by going through the coloured gates, and keep an eye out for the hidden routes. Keep one eye constantly poised at the skies as well, you never know when a statue is accidentally going to fall and crush you.



Preferred mode of transport – Street luge

Italy

How we end up in Italy is anyone's guess, but this track has all the key traits to make it a picturesque must for tourists. St Mark's Square, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and plenty of twisty, turny back streets that are bloody hard to navigate through whilst hurtling along at 80mph.



Preferred mode of transport – Street luge

Bonus Cash Track

If you enter every gate on a particular course, you'll go on to race in the special Cash Track for a chance at bagging yourself a load of loot. See how much you can actually accumulate within the pretty short time limit.



Preferred mode of transport – Group 4

PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Street Cred:
 Value:

Played 73%
A rolling geek gathers no cred

► Smoke rings, hah! With a chainsaw you can produce offal rings. Miles better.

▼ The night sections might not make very good screenshots but they make for incredibly tense gameplay. Scary stuff.



DOOM

A bit of a departure from your typical *Play WorkStation*, over the next few pages we take a look over the looming PlayStation arrival of the world's biggest videogame ever, – it's *Doom*.

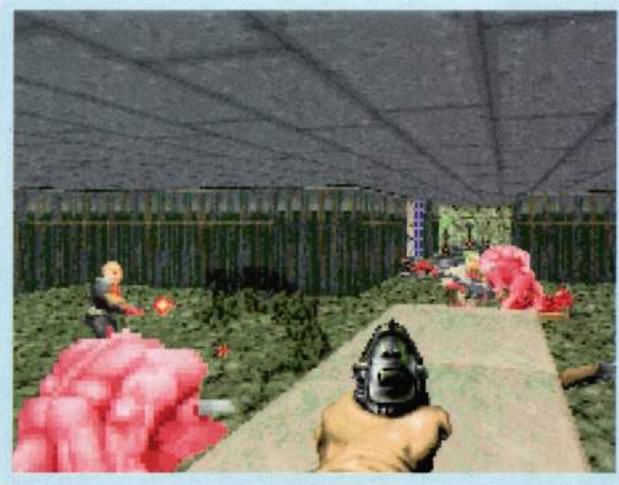
Doom may be an old friend, but never, ever, take it for granted. It's still the same nasty piece of work it always was, it still swallows your free-time, digests your leisure time and freaks you out big time.

After all the hype it has generated on a multitude of other platforms, PlayStation-success comes guaranteed, especially as its Williams-developed version is The Daddy!

The pace is frenetic, there's little to distract you and all sneaky tactics can, and really have to, be employed if you're to make a fight of it to the death. And the guy with the scythe takes up near-permanent residence when *Doom's* around.

Texan chaps id Software are supposedly as pleased as punch with the conversion Williams have done. As well as being technically superb, the PlayStation game even incorporates *Doom II*. Apart from endless levels and a cold beer, what more could you ask for?

Looking just like PC *Doom* would if it was running on a Pentium, the PlayStation version is supremely slick and plays fluidly. Not bad for a game that isn't quite finished yet. And the reason it isn't finished? They've still to put in all the new levels! New levels? Can it be? Oh yes. New improved levels to offer the Sony user a bit extra. *Doom* on the PlayStation looks like it'll be all the best bits from all the *Dooms*, and then some. There's talk of there being around 50 levels in the finished game.



DOOM

Plenty for all fans alike. Whenever you want a rest, finish the level first and jot down the password. At a later date you can continue the carnage.

There are two episodes you can choose from. The first runs along the lines of the original *Doom*, where you start off with just a pistol. Through the process of gunning down former buddies, you can upgrade your weapons

and collect more ammo with which to carry on your slaughter. The pistol soon becomes a shotgun, then a mini-gun, rocket launcher, plasma rifle, and finally the BFG 9000. Once you're out of ammo, you've got to punch your way through the levels until you find some more.

Even if you've got a chain saw, there's no respite from the attacking hordes. In the second, *Doom II*-oriented levels, the only extra addition to your arsenal is the double-barrelled shotgun which guzzles twice the number of shells, but is, after all, doubly as effective in the culling stakes. It's especially effective when up against any surprise ambushes.

The original *Doom* was designed so you had to master tactical avenues of approach. There's no point in charging in, guns blazing, as all the



▲ Demons, not the best of tennis partners, and not the best people to meet in dark alleyways.



PLAY
information

● Design Team: id/Williams
● Team Leader: Michael Abbot
● Where at: 95% complete
● Target Release: End November '96
● Publisher: GT Interactive



◀ All the favourite weapons are included here.

▶ A cacodemon, we believe. C'mon then, when you're ready.



These may stun even the experienced *Doom* 'user'. For example, in previous versions, whenever there was an invisible monster running around, you could see its shimmering outline. Now, however, the whole monster is translucent in its appearance, making it appear ghost-like. The first

time you see it, you'll be spooked. The other notable aspect of *Doom* is the Deathmatch option. This is in from the start on the PlayStation. No game to date has created such an intense feeling of actually being hunted down like a badger in its set. Played across a network, or a serial link (as in the PlayStation's case), the object is to kill all the nasties as per usual, as well as killing your opponent(s) with the weapons that are scattered around. Then if you feel like it, exit to the next level and continue the trend. There is also the small matter of the co-operative game which lets you team up with a friend instead of annihilating them, but where's the fun in that?

To put it simply, it looks like the Sony PlayStation is going to have the

imps and demons would just laugh at you, kick your head in and nick your watch. Nope, the clever man would size up the situation then gleefully waste all the by now smirking imps with a flick of the wrist. PlayStation *Doom* has been ever so slightly redesigned with quick playability in mind. Huge jumps have been replaced with smaller ones, so there's less time messing around falling earthwards, and more time wasting the opposition. Fans of the original will instantly note that certain monsters aren't where they're supposed to be, or have been replaced by just as nasty ones, but who cares? If you got the same game it would be boring. At least some thought has gone into this to keep that initial sparkle in there.

Thanks to the power of PlayStation, and its skill, Williams has been able to include a whole load of dazzling new effects.

Thanks to the power of PlayStation, and its skill, Williams has been able to include a whole load of dazzling new effects.

Thanks to the power of PlayStation, and its skill, Williams has been able to include a whole load of dazzling new effects.



◀ Talk about the beast inside. Or beasts in this case and they're rather to close to getting inside me!





best version of any console yet, playing at above-Pentium speeds and with radically improved and realistic-sounding spot effects. *Doom* is coming. Get the caffeine ready and just pray that the electricity never runs out.

▲ Double-barrelled, double the fun, double the damage for everyone.

▼ Putting monsters in with med-kits is nasty. I'm not impressed.



The ID Inside

Doom wasn't the first from id "in demand" software, and it won't be the last. The guys are now on their eighth games since setting up in 1990.

Wolfenstein 3D

The simple, addictive Nazi-bashing forerunner to *Doom* where id decided that this first person perspective lark might not be a bad idea after all. What you do is run round a Coliditz-like castle killing Nazis. Simple, huh?

Doom

The one you're all waiting for. The one that spawned a thousand clones and more wads than Wrigleys. *Doom* is the best, it transformed the videogames industry and, according to id boss Jay Wilbur, the PlayStation version is the best.

Doom II

The same, but harder with new levels, monsters and weapons, but not that many actually. Still, it adds up to a great slice of blast-and-slice action. The PlayStation version is heavily based on *Doom II*, and takes the game to new limits.

Heretic

Doom in tights, and one for or those who can remember that dodgy *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon and the world of fantasy role-playing.

The game, written by Raven to the Software for id, is based on the *Doom* graphics engine. It isn't, we believe, PlayStation-bound, but the sequel, *Hexen - Beyond Heretic*, is.

Ultimate Doom (Thy Flesh Consumed)

Extra episodes and some of the best-designed levels of any *Doom* game ever. It also marked GT Interactive's entrance into the European market, and the start of their relationship with id Software. It only cost £30 quid too, but we've haven't heard any PlayStation release plans yet. But with PlayStation *Doom* based on *Doom II* on PC, it might make a logical sequel if *Quake* doesn't arrive before next Christmas...

Hexen

Otherwise known as *Beyond Heretic*, this commercial 'sequel' will give players a choice of characters and boast a brand-new weapon system. There'll be more details in *Play* very, very, soon.

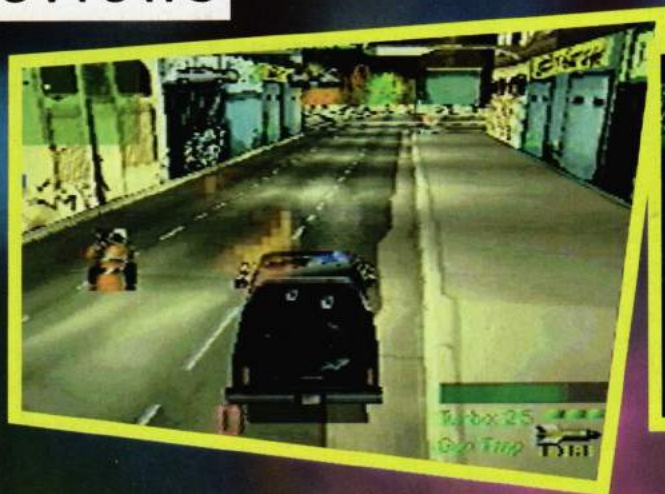
Doom Screensaver

It's a *Doom* screensaver.

Quake

The next big thing. The 'proper' sequel to *Doom* (it'll have a whole new engine) the game boasts ~~some~~ of the best 3D graphics ever.





Twisted Metal

Mirror, signal, blast the son-of-a-bitch off the road. Andy McDermott chucks the Highway Code in the bin and prepares to engage maximum destructive force.

Everyone, at some time or other, has been stuck in a traffic jam, usually behind some Austin Maxi-driving git of a caravanner. And absolutely everyone in this situation has found themselves wishing that the cause of their delay would DIE SCREAMING IN HIDEOUS BLAZING TORMENT! Ahem.

Twisted Metal, then, will suit everyone. Forget racing, as in *Ridge Racer*. Forget even ramming and sideswiping, as in *Destruction Derby*. *Twisted Metal* lets you go the whole hog and annihilate anybody who gets in your way in a hail of machine gun fire – it's the world's first road rage simulator!

Twelve psychos, ranging from a New York cabbie to a Mad Max clone, have all met up in Los Angeles (where else?) for a cheerful day of utter carnage, organised by a chap who looks suspiciously like Mick Hucknall after he fell asleep face down on a sandwich toaster. The last one whose internal organs are still on the inside wins!

The controls are as simplified as those of *Destruction Derby*, but on this occasion the game doesn't suffer – who

wants to be poncing around with gears when there's some loon in a monster truck trying to turn your head into pizza? Go forward, go backward, go ruin someone's evening with a missile up the arse... what more do you need? It's simple, immediate, and exactly what any fast action game needs.

Make no mistake, there's plenty of action. It all starts gently, with a bit of one-on-one in a *Destruction Derby*-style arena, but once past that you move onto the streets of LA to find that – no fair! – the other contestants are ganging up on you. How should you respond to this? Well, by killing them, obviously.

Each car has its own special weapons, such as napalm ice cream cones or spirits of the evil dead (honest), as well as a selection of add-on kit that would make James Bond weep like a schoolgirl with envy.

Homing missiles, mines, oil sprayers... everything you need for a cosy and safe trip round the M25.

While *Twisted Metal* is gleefully entertaining, it has a problem common to many of the PlayStation games I've played – it's too bloody easy! The levels – which include sprawling freeways and an idealised suburbia, complete with apple pie-eating Americans in deckchairs

to run over – look great, despite some occasionally annoying polygon wobbling. But, and this is the killer, they don't take long to slaughter your way through. A few days' play will be all you need to complete the game, and once the carnage palls, you're left with a very

The world's first road rage simulator

PLAY information

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505*
Expected: November
Expected price: £39.99

etal

◀ Sitting peacefully in his deckchair, Johnny Suburbia has little inkling of the horrible screaming death that awaits him.

▼ Calypso, the organiser. Relax, girls, he's married.



▲ This tank is driven by Minion, last year's winner. Wimpy name, hard git.

▼ Satanistic trucker Darkside goes head-to-head with the... well, dead Spectre.



expensive placemat. Still, if not as durable, it's a lot more fun than *Destruction Derby*, and the two player mode provides the kind of laughs you'd expect when you get to murder your friends in cold blood. It's just a pity that it only lasts a bit longer than the average motorway snarl-up.



Sarf of the river? This time of night?

Why do people have it in for cabbies? The way they're portrayed on film and TV, and now in *Twisted Metal*, anyone would think they're all nutters. Let's examine the evidence...

Travis Bickle (Taxi Driver)

Robert De Niro drives a licenced hack. He shaves off most of his hair, shoots Harvey Keitel and blasts off someone else's fingers with a .44 magnum. Verdict: Fruit and!

Bloke from Cracker (erm, Cracker)

Bloke gets a job piloting a minicab around Manchester. Before Robbie Coltrane's had his first whiskey, he's out murdering people. Verdict: Whole hazel!

Rotting corpse (Ghostbusters)

Undead fella starts the meter and sets off the wrong way up a one-way street. Yuppie passenger doesn't notice anything wrong. Hey, it's New York. Verdict: KP!

The Carry On team (Carry On Cabbie)

Kenneth Williams flares his nostrils! Sid James goes "hyak hyak hyak"! Barbara Windsor's top flies off! Etc! Verdict: More nuts than squirrel pool!

PLAY verdict

Looks: ██████████
Sounds: ██████████
Road rage: ██████████
Value: ██████████

Played 78%
Slams on the brakes too early

Hebereke's Popitto

What the hell is this Hebereke thing? Play could tell you what it thinks about it, but we promised our publisher we'd cut out some of the harsher foul language.

I tried long and hard to adapt my chain of thinking to match the twisted logic behind this exceedingly strange game.

Unfortunately, all efforts were sadly in vain because no matter how hard I tried to prise anything worthwhile from this *Tetris*-style jumble, my search for an element of gameplay had to be abandoned when my brain unexpectedly melted. This game is lame, very lame. It basically mangles together your *Tetris* and your *Mean Bean Machine* formulas and adds the groundbreaking twist of incorporating moving blocks that constantly dart about the playing area refusing to be connected to fallers. Thrillsville! It's hardly reason enough to churn out boring pap like this which, given the power of PlayStation, could quite easily have been a mere loading game.

It does get slightly better in the two player head to head mode (but anything is better than the acutely uninteresting one player mode) as it resorts to the ancient method of rewarding large clearances by dumping stack loads of bricks, sorry... creatures, onto your unworthy opponent. But, the competitive element of malicious rivalry that made games such as *Puzzle Bobble* and *Mean Bean Machine* so compelling is missing. After all, if neither of you care, what's the point? Playing this, you just switch off and let your hands get on with it. There aren't even any

comedy effects to liven things up, just the occasional high-pitched squeal from some helium-intoxicated creatures, presumably inserted to somehow make this game appealing. Well, it won't wash with us! *Hebereke's Popitto* looks awful, plays abysmally and is just a general all round bad egg which doesn't offer anything new to the genre. Surely by now, someone, somewhere must be able to produce a PlayStation puzzle game that doesn't suck!

PLAY information

- Publisher: Marubeni/Sunsoft
- Customer support: 0171 8268816
- Price: £39.99
- Expected when: End November

PLAY verdict

- Looks:
- Sounds:
- Rivalry:
- Value:

Played 43%
Pop off Hebereke!



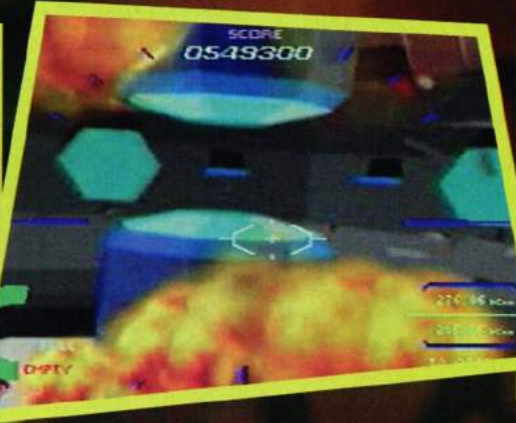
► This hideously bright banner means you've won!



▲ I pull more interestingly-coloured blobs out of my nose on a Friday night!

► Welcome to sleezeville!





Starblade α

It was a stunningly innovative graphical wonder in its time, but times have changed and now *Starblade α* has a lot more to contend with.

On its original release in the arcades, *Starblade* wasn't so much a game as a theatrical experience. You stepped into the deluxe cabinet, inserted your quid and then entered a mind-blowing *Star Wars* scenario whereby you weaved in and out of star destroyer types and blasted the crap out of everything. Unfortunately though, your route through the levels was carved in stone and there was absolutely no freedom to go where you desired – the only control you actually had was over the fire button to blast as many of the enemy crafts as possible and pick-off the incoming missiles before they did untold damage to your ship. Not a complete fest of options!

The game was a blinding success on the 3DO as well, but something has gone drastically wrong in the translation process onto the PlayStation.

Graphically, it looks better than ever. Much of the detail lacking in the 3DO version has been inserted to give the game a very crisp appearance that not only does wonders for the PlayStation's cause, but will probably sell this game outright. But the main problem is the speed, it has deteriorated dramatically leaving the gameplay exceedingly jerky and frustratingly sluggish.

Even if *Starblade* had a major turbo boost shoved up its rectum though, that still wouldn't disguise that fact that without total manoeuvrability and control over your own fate, you, the player, will undoubtedly eventually

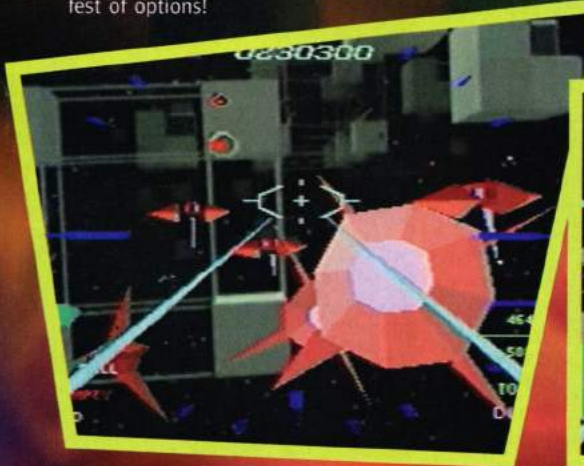
get considerably bored. With only basic lasers at your disposal and no missiles or super weapons, this is just a very attractive fairground ride that will get your head spinning for a while but will never break you out in a sweat or keep you coming back for another trip.

PLAY+ information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0881 505 505*
- Price: £39.99
- Expected when: December



▼ This is an explosion in case you were wondering.



PLAY+ verdict

Looks:	■■■■■■■■■■
Sounds:	■■■■■■■■■■
Control:	■■■■■■■■■■
Value:	■■■■■■■■■■

Played 68%
Light cruising on a mono rail

*Sony customer support line is charged at 39p/min (peak) 25p/min (off peak)

After the disappointing WWF: Wrestlemania, Play wasn't relishing the prospect of more pantomime punishment, but who could fail to be impressed by this?

PLAY information

Publisher: Tommy
Customer support: No UK number
Price: £69.99
Expected when: Out Now

new Jap Pro Wrestling

If the *Virtua Fighters* were to retire from exciting combat and dabble in the world of wrestling, this is exactly what the result would look like.

No question, the first thing that piledrives you into the canvas is the superb graphics. The wrestlers themselves are fantastically animated polygon monsters that move incredibly smoothly and boast an impressively wide array of exhilarating moves.

Apparently, this is the official Japanese equivalent of the WWF, and all of the combatants portrayed here are in actual fact real live superstars – fascinating I'm sure but how does it play?

Generally speaking, it's just a bloody good laugh! The general set-up is simple to get into and the easily accessible moves means that you can get straight into the thick of the action right away.

The controls consist mainly of one punch or kick move to floor your

opponent and then there are a multitude of throws and holds to contort their limbs into unsavoury positions and generally make the scum squeal like pigs.

Unfortunately, it isn't particularly taxing to the average beat 'em-up freak, but no doubt there is a lot of hidden stuff tucked away just waiting to be rooted out – oh come on, you didn't expect us to make sense of the Japanese instruction booklet did you?

What kept me playing though, was the sheer comedy factor and the incredibly camp holds which look as though deviant sexual acts are being committed right before your very eyes. Julian Clary would love this.

The way you can shove your opponent through the ropes and follow suit to pound him outside the ring is great fun too – and you can even slam their heads against the metal crowd barriers and watch them stagger around in a daze for extra laffs.

The one player game won't keep you coming back for long, but the two player set-up is in a league of its own. The fights can last for anything from two minutes to two hours and it is just a constant slug-fest as both players exchange blows and throws in regular doses. The action is enhanced by an atmospheric crowd presence and in-ring ref who is forever darting around to avoid being decked!

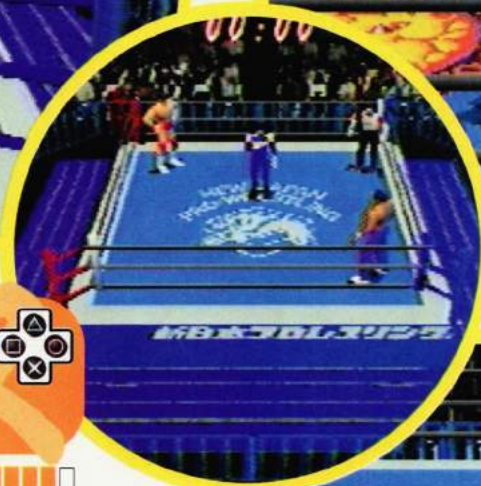
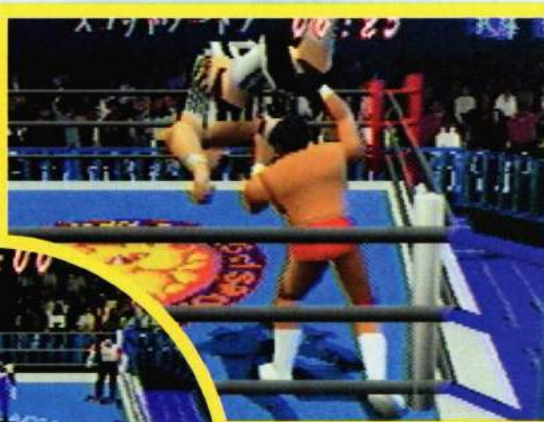
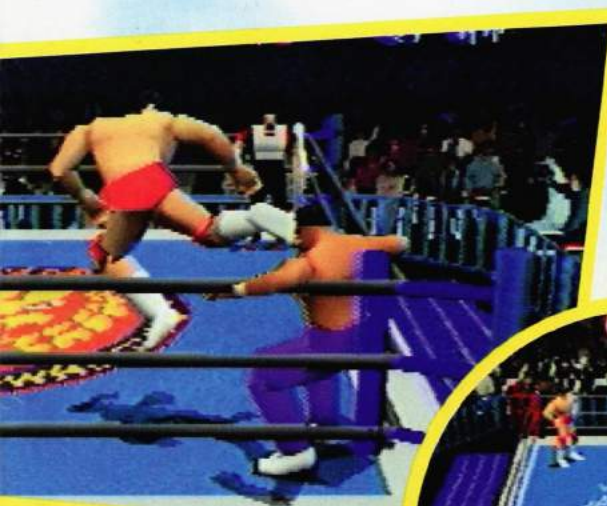
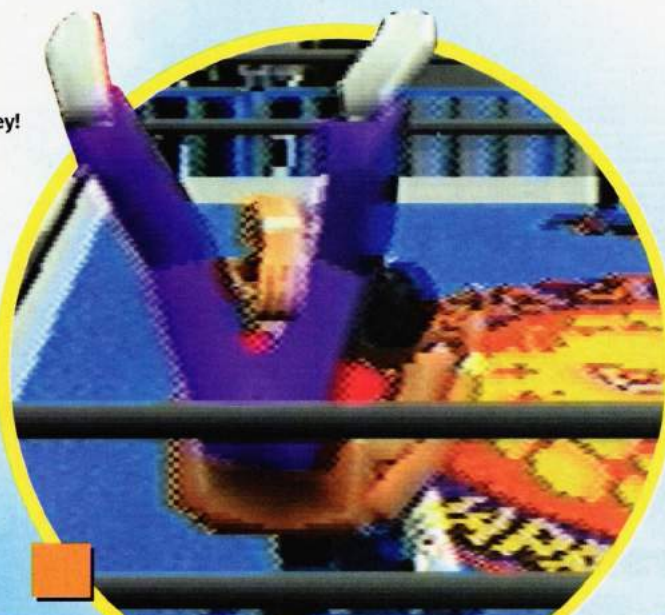
I've never particularly liked wrestling as a whole, but *New Jap Pro Wrestling* is genuinely compelling and a riotous experience is sure to be had by all. It is easily the best wrestling game to be had on any system and a rather fine looking one at that. Slammin'!

Make the
scum
squeal
like pigs



► No admittance into this club without a thorough search matey!

Pro Wrestling



▲ Eat canvas sucker.
▼ No more oral pleasure jokes this month I'm afraid!



PLAY verdict

Looks: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
 Sounds: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
 Campness: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐
 Value: ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐

Played 84%
The fat boys done good

Beware of Cheap Imitations!

So, *New Jap Pro Wrestling* is the Japanese equivalent of the notorious *WWF* is it? Well, here are eight good reasons why the *WWF* can never be imitated:

1. Apparently, the Japs take their wrestling federation very seriously indeed, whereas everybody knows that the *WWF* is just a load of fat, talentless meat-heads who sprout crap and bungle through choreographed competitions.
2. The Japanese are better actors and so the whole staged affair looks a damn sight more convincing.
3. The kids wouldn't have a clue who any of the Japanese wrestlers are. When we spoke to a typical kiddie on the subject he said: "Go away or I'll tell my mummy". What further proof do you need?
4. It is a well known fact that no Japanese wrestler has ever starred in a crap Hollywood film. As we all know, mum's favourite, Hulk Hogan has done this on more than one embarrassing occasion with turkeys such as Mr. Nanny and Thunder in Paradise.
5. In Japanese wrestling, there are no sad tossers who think it's cool to carry planks of wood around with them wherever they go. Who could forget that witty and incredibly intelligent chap Jim "Hacksaw" Duggen threatening to whack Andi Peters round the mush on Saturday morning television. Actually, that's not such a completely bad idea...
6. Acclaim don't own the rights to release games based on Japanese wrestling.
7. You can't buy cheap crappy toys of Japanese wrestlers, not like those brilliant plastic figures and first-class bendy dolls of Hulk, Underwear, and Ronald MacDonald or whatever that stupid clown geezer calls himself.
8. The Japanese wrestling federation doesn't share its initials with a well known wildlife organisation, thus confusing grannies when they sit down to watch panda bears on the telly, only to be confronted by a 10-foot sissy in a leotard that is anything but cute and furry!



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the country's number one unofficial PlayStation magazine is dangling one of Sony's sexy little machines right under your eager noses. How kind are we? Not only that, but thanks to Warner Interactive, or what ever they're calling themselves this week, we also have four, yes, **FOUR** copies of the sensational *Striker '96* footy type game to give away for absolutely nothing. All you discerning readers have to fork out for is a stamp and a postcard (hopefully interesting...we get bored of the 'Bognor at Night' kind of crapness), oh and just a little bit of brain power is needed.



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Sentients Ahoy

There are 19 sentients in total, plus an extra one that appears after a certain period of time in each battle arena. Each sentient has its own characteristics – they have their advantages and disadvantages. Here's the low-down on all those evil entities.

Arachan

A four legged spider mech, with powerful weapons but lacking in the tactical department. Follows you around slavishly, rather than intelligently.

Qualm

A four-armed bi-ped with a rocket launcher on each arm, with only moderate armour and weak spots. It's mean, but not that mean.

Dedlok

A large mech with broad shoulders and a low head, this one's strong and powerful but a bit dim and slow to react.

Thunderfoot

A heavily armoured mech with a chest that fires a barrage of rockets. Firing at his open chest when most vulnerable is the best way to defeat this sentient.

Flamefront

Wolf-like in appearance and sly in action to boot, this sentient is rather devious. Light and fast, this enemy

Krazy

Ever wanted to participate in a bit of needless warfare? Fed up with having to think about tactical manoeuvres? Want to go all out in a battle arena with enemies that are larger than life? Krazy KV(That's Asam) dons his body armour and meets up with *Krazy Ivan*.



◀ Fireball is one of the hardest sentients to defeat, with heavy armour and some awesome firepower to boot.

Doom's excellent, yeah, but, well, the demons etc. are a bit small, aren't they? What about having some seriously large opposition to battle? Well, your dreams have come true, courtesy of the Liverpool branch of the Soviet Union. Yup, inspired by Russia's advanced technology and disturbed individuals, Sony Interactive have come up with the ultimate in Manga-style mech-warrior warfare, *Krazy Ivan* – a game where abandoning the idea of keeping a straight head is the only way to survive.

Psygnosis (they're called Sony Interactive when they sell games, Psygnosis when they make them) started work on *Krazy Ivan* about two years ago.

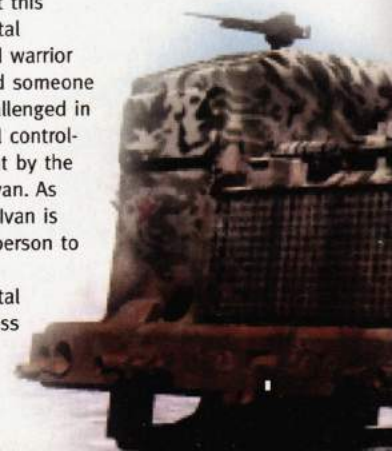
The original idea, to have an army of robots wandering around a cityscape blasting the living daylights out of each other, was fairly simple. Since then *Krazy Ivan* has gone through several mutations in storyline and plot, with its latest incarnation really only coming together over the last year or so.

Save the world.

The story goes like this. Some aliens have decided to take over the earth. There seems to be no reason for this hostility, but then again, they're aliens, and they don't need a reason. They're doing this by isolating key places on Earth as hideaways, and then warping into these designated shielded areas and slowly building up their army. Anyway,

you take the role of the eponymous protagonist Krazy Ivan, and it's your job to (drum roll) save the world.

Of course, in these days of being nice to Mr. Yeltsin and pastel curtains replacing iron ones all over Eastern Europe it wouldn't be quite right if the only guys who got to save the world were blond, blue-eyed Americans. Aha! In this game, the Russians are actually the good guys. It's the reds who've got this experimental mechanoid warrior thingy, and someone a little challenged in the mental control-department by the name of Ivan. As he's nuts, Ivan is the ideal person to man an experimental robot. Guess what?





an

You're Ivan. Kitted out in your metal soldier-suit, your mission is to contest the alien encroachment, and thwart their megalomaniacal plans. Sounds simple, and it is.

Kill, maim, destroy.

"It's mainly a shoot 'em up," beams Salim Siwani, the lead programmer on *Krazy Ivan*. "There are tactics, but we've mainly stuck to the crazy, maniacal elements. The only strategy you need to take care of is to make sure you conserve your ammo, and destroy the miscreants!"

"What really sets this game apart from others in this genre, is the level of detail in the animation and characteristics of the alien sentients," he continues. "We have created some of the most outlandish opponents, based on composite mechanical representations of real creatures found on Earth. For example, there is an elephantine sentient that behaves very much like you would expect an elephant to behave, albeit in a far more advanced robot-like manner. There are 19 different types of alien that must all be destroyed, all with their own specific modus operandi. The sentient based on the snake, for example, moves incredibly realistically, as do all the other different aliens, and they all have different patterns of attack and intelligence levels, just as you would expect in real life."

Krazy Ivan is played in several different zones or arenas around the world, such as Riyadh,

Paris, or even Disneyland. Unfortunately the game doesn't attempt to recreate the authentic landscapes, this would have been technically very difficult and would have detracted from the gameplay. However, despite the landscapes being rather barren in detail, *Krazy Ivan* does have some of the best-looking, contoured, distance-faded landscapes yet seen on the PlayStation. Still, each location is accompanied by some very amusing tongue-in-cheek full-motion-video clips intercut between the action, and rather than just being eye-candy, these clips actually serve to

There are 19 different types of alien that must be destroyed, all with their own specific modus operandi.

hides then pounces. Flamefront's weakness is his light head armour.

Claw

This calliper-kitted crustacean looks like a lobster, but is definitely not of the thermidore variety. With laser-firing claws this guy is mean, but slow to move.

Dwarf

This short, stocky mech is rather slow in the reaction front, but has an awesome arsenal and some heavy armour. His weak spot is the sensor on his head.

Reflex

This sentient is very fast and accurate, but luckily this hoverbot's weapons don't do too much damage and he's not too heavily armoured.

Colossus

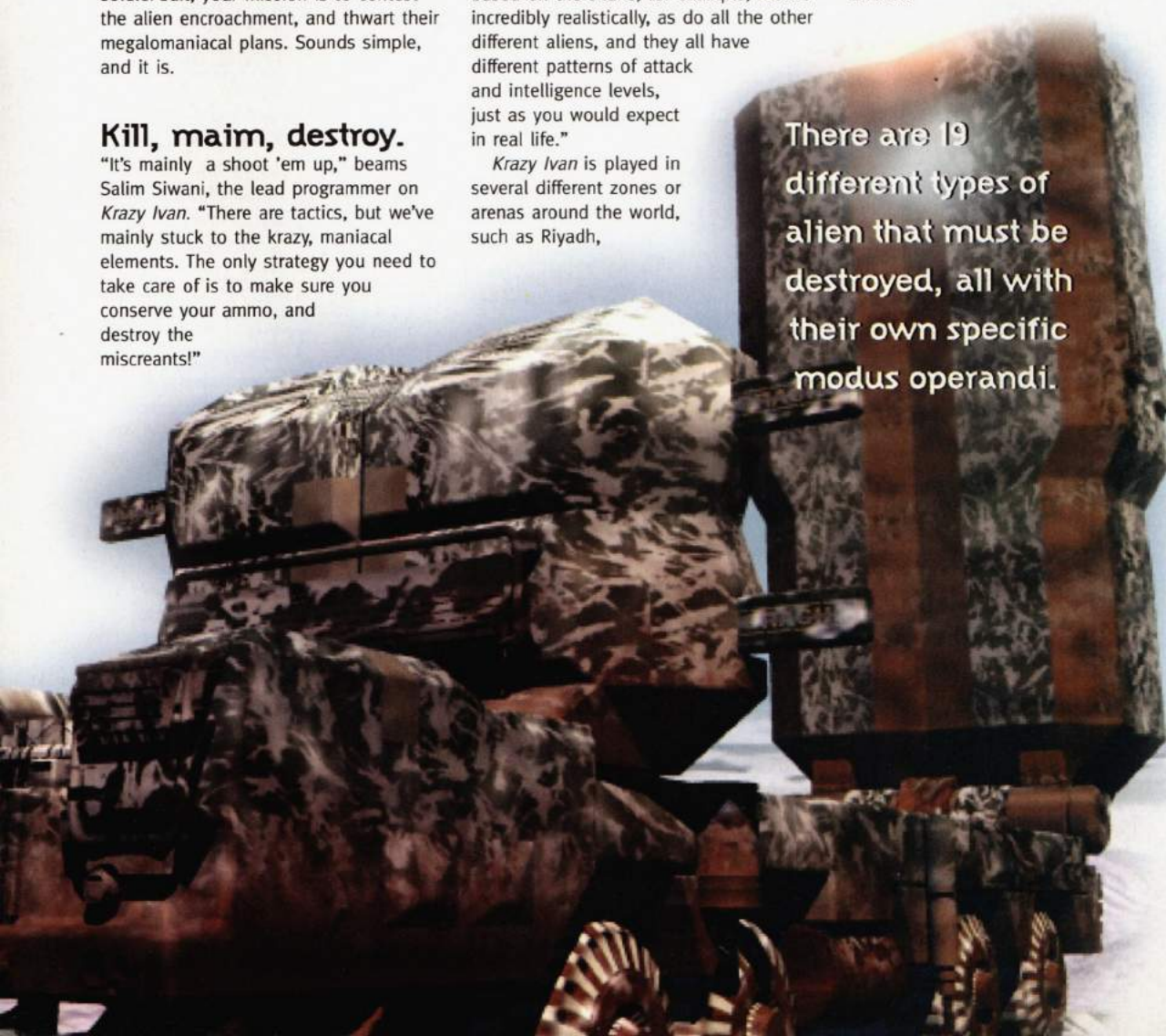
Colossal in nature and in firepower, this hard-armoured sentient has few weak points, but can be defeated by cunningly timed blow to the back of the head.

Buzzsaw

This gnat-like mech flies around, has six legs each packed with a weapon, and can transform from robot to mosquito and back when needed.

Scorch

This writhing mech stands upright, with four arms/legs and is a devious beast that hides until you're in close proximity and then



pounces with a nasty sting in its tail.

Raptor

This powerful wingless bird-like creature hops around the arena and when it finds you, lets loose in a bad way! Raptor has powerful weapons but weak armour, so hit and don't get hit.

Behemoth

This huge elephantine mech has incredible armour but a soft spot on his tummy. This one's approach is to walk past you side-on and fire with its side-mounted weaponry.

Prowl

This tiger-like quadruped is rather catty and hides behind natural features, only to pounce with guns blazing. This unit is fast, intelligent and decently armoured.

Granite

This mutating mech can disguise itself as a large rock and has some tough armour with powerful weapons. Weaknesses are lack of speed and vulnerability on the exposed parts.

Arclight

This mean looking robot has a backpack that can deliver an awesome 'O' shaped beam. With strong armour, defeating it involves targeting its vulnerable rear backpack.

Carapace

Insectoid in nature, this unit is made up

depict the setting and actually provide you with much needed little clues to help you on your mission.

The cherry on the cake? What also helps set this game apart from most shooters is the intense two-player link-up mode. This time, instead of fighting against an alien, you have the opportunity to alienate a friend. In this mode, both players have exactly the same mechanoid body suit to wander around in, so you'll have to out-think your human opponent. With the landscape sparsely littered with power-ups, you must carefully plan your manoeuvres, but then again, ultimately this is a game of intense destruction and all-out warfare.

Krazy Ivan is now practically complete. For a game of this genre, *Krazy Ivan* is most definitely the best looking I've come across to date. For simplicity in gameplay and accessibility, Sony Interactive have again come up trumps. *Play* will be bringing you a full review of this crazy game very soon.

▼ Despite being named Dwarf, this sentient is definitely no small-fry. He's got some serious firepower and must be handled carefully in order to defeat him.



Scorch has been scorched! This devious bot has been beaten at his own dirty game. Nice one Ivan.



▼ The hardest sentients to defeat are those that use the forcefields for protection. Tactical play is required here.



of two major parts that act on their own when the Carapace has been split. Weaknesses are the light armour and the join between the halves.

Fireball

This one's got some awesome artillery and some very heavy armour, but is rather slow to react and is vulnerable around the sensors. Watch out.

Sentinel

The Sentinel is a fast, intelligent nastie with electronic counter measures to your attacks. With some hefty weapons, this is one serious warrior.

Black Knight

(Extra)
This is the daddy !! A cross between an insect and a humanoid, this unit also has a built in warp feature to elude your fire. Must be beaten at very short range. Dangerous! This mech appears after about eight minutes in an arena.

◀ The scenery may seem a little bare, but the action is plenty. With numerous weapons to collect and use, and a wild assortment of mech-warriors to defeat, this game is one big firepower frenzy.

PLAY information

- Design team: Psygnosis
- Team leader: Kristian R-Jones
- Where at: 99% complete
- Target release: January '96
- Publisher: Sony Interactive Europe

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Off World Interceptor

Prepare for the ride of your life, and not between the sheets with the super model of your choice, but on a barren planet, pursued by maniacs. Ryan Butt red lines through this futuristic romp.

My first impressions of this weren't good. It seemed like a shambolic mess of swirling terrain, swarms of lasers, and just general mass carnage. But then I thought to myself "Hey, this is actually quite playable, definitely all over the shop, but playable".

Off World Interceptor is a very strange game indeed, and playing it effectively involves removing every ounce of sanity and reason from your brain as you mindlessly belt through hazardous canyons dishing out ream upon ream of firepower into anything that twitches.

Saying that, it also borrows quite substantially from other games. Familiar sights include the shops to buy upgrades, the many vehicles that can be chosen, and indeed even the gameplay bares an uncanny resemblance to BMG's other

new PlayStation title, *Total Eclipse Turbo* – except this one's on wheels.

Hanging loosely around a futuristic scenario featuring six unsavoury planets, the best starting policy is to equip your high-tech moon buggy with as many weapons as funds allow. Then it's all systems go as you race through each level of the planets blowing the enemy jeeps away whilst clearing a path to get safely through to the other side. There are weapon pick-ups, damage repairers and money to scoop up along the way to help your cause, but generally speaking, anything goes and it often does!

When you've negotiated the three levels that comprise each planet, you'll be up against a big, bad-ass boss that will stop at nothing to blow you to smithereens. You have to use your brain to figure out the best method to defeat them.

It moves at a rapid rate of knots

escape when you're being tracked, there are certain portals which when entered, warp the player directly behind their opponent, enabling them to get in a torrent of abuse before the hunter-turned-prey attempts to turn the tables.

Graphically, the whole affair is unremarkable. Indeed, much of the fine detail seen in the 3Do version has been scrapped in favour of more speed. And it is quick, the whole game moves at such a rapid rate of knots that you seldom have time to stop and enjoy the less

than average scenery anyway.

The levels consist of a one-way course – there's no going back so if you miss something, it's lost in the midst of time. You can go sideways, though, and by doing this you can fool yourself into thinking that the levels span across forever. But then you notice that by going too far in one direction the scenery loops and you end up back where you started. Also, to avoid too much dilly dallying, BMG has put in a harsh time limit, and the constant ticking acts as a reminder that your best chance of survival is to keep on the move.

Off World Interceptor certainly won't win the PlayStation any new followers because to be frank it looks pretty dire and moves like your very worst hangover nightmare. But, at the end of the day, it is addictive and you will find yourself constantly returning to gain that extra bit of ground. It's certainly a tough challenge and not the kind of game that will be breezed through in simply a matter of hours.

PLAY information

- Publisher: BMG
- Customer support: 0171 3847864
- Expected price: £39.99
- Expected when: 17th November



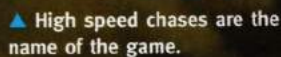
▲ This is the first big guardian – a huge armoured tank. To defeat it, simply to one side whilst angling your shots across.

► As you progress, more hazards crop up to challenge your cause.



There is also a split-screen simultaneous two player game which is a lot more fun than the repetitive action of playing on your tod. It's basically a cat and mouse chase to see who can kill the other first. To make it easier to





So, if you like your games unpredictable and er, messy, *Off World Interceptor* is about as unpredictable and messy as they come. I only hope BMG supply a sick-bag!



► Go on a shopping spree to beef-up your vehicle.



PLAY 
verdict

Looks: 
Sounds: 
Giddiness: 
Value: 

Played 77%
Stomach-churning speedy mayhem

Games that make you go bleugh!

Feeling a bit giddy the morning after a piss-up? If so then steer well clear of *Off World Interceptor*, its swirly terrains and frantic speed make for nausea-rising head-spins. Here are some other games which are perhaps best to avoid if you're feeling under the weather, so to speak:

NCAA Basketball (SNES)

Urgh! This is the original stomach churner. Whilst engaging in a friendly game of this with a colleague after the Christmas party, the Mode 7 rotational effects were just too much for my poor stomach to bare and a quick dash to the loo was in order.

Lawnmower Man (SNES)

Another poor culprit of excessive use of Mode 7, this futuristic platformer was fine until you entered the crazy flying sequences and then it was just an all out psychedelic-burp frenzy!

Striker '96 (3D0)

Feverishly fast and blurry to boot, playing this game on a come-down could prove to be a nightmare with a belly full of booze.

WipeOut (PlayStation)

Hughee! The speed of light gameplay of this futuristic racer will undoubtedly rage havoc with your frail gills before too long. We recommend regular stops to the intergalactic service stations...or something.

Stephen Hill, renowned for over-expressing his point of view, casts his eye over this effort from Electronic Arts.



Viewpoint indeed, I'll give them a sodding viewpoint. The viewpoint in this particular game is actually one of its worst aspects.

Anyway, essentially a 3D shoot 'em-up, this ferocious blaster has the pilot steering a spaceship in a vague overhead north-easterly direction whilst attempting to evade or exterminate hordes of oncoming aggressors. In plain English (sorry, I forgot this was a console mag), that translates as shoot everything in sight and try to avoid the vitriol that they're throwing back at you. This may sound fairly straightforward, but in practice is a task beyond even the adroit capabilities of the most lagged-up of jourmos. I swear it wasn't this hard on the Neo Geo a few months ago.

The aforementioned spaceship is stuck on an inexorable forward heading and comes armed with a fairly standard gun, which unleashes a vastly improved shot if the fire key is held down for a brief period of time. There is also a special weapon which is useful for getting out of tight spots in the nick of time, as it effectively obliterates anything in the way, but, unfortunately, has only limited ammunition. (It would be a bit easy otherwise - Ed). The usual supply of power-ups are available to boost firepower and

although the initial control method is difficult due to the odd angle, it soon becomes reasonably manageable as the player has no choice but to adapt to lurching out of the way of the numerous incoming objects. Said objects come in many shapes and sizes, from irritating globes to large spinning wheels, and graphically *Viewpoint* is certainly lively.

The basic premise of the game may sound fairly simplistic, but *Viewpoint* is compulsive due mainly to it being so damned difficult. Even on the easy setting, several efforts are required to make progress to the successive stages and it is virtually impossible to achieve this without a requisite amount of swearing and teeth-grinding. Talking of teeth-grinding, the one section of society (apart from gamers who like it hardcore) where this may find a market is in returning clubbers looking to kill a few hours before retiring to their pits. With its pounding house beat accompanied by glib 'people' let's go lyrics, it is ideal brain fodder for dilated dilettantes to endlessly exercise their trigger fingers whilst tapping a foot and chewing on a three hour-old piece of rubbery gum.

That is not to say that *Viewpoint* is totally mindless though (honest), as a degree of strategy is required to negotiate the variety of heinous obstacles, and conserving special firepower until the salient moment is a crucial factor in any successful effort.

Many PlayStation games have been criticised for being too easy - *Viewpoint* certainly doesn't fall into that category. It is an extremely challenging, if a bit of a patience-trying, game.

Dedicated gamers with the mental fortitude to constantly negotiate the same stages until they strike it lucky may find lasting value in *Viewpoint*, as will anyone with masochistic tendencies. Many others, though, may consider it far too repetitive and annoyingly linear to hold much appeal.

An above average effort, *Viewpoint* is in no danger of becoming a console classic, and may soon be ungraciously consigned to the ever-growing CD ranks of PlayStation nearly men.

This is a very ferocious blaster



PLAY+ information

- Publisher: EA
- Customer support: 01753 546465
- Price: £44.99
- Expected when: End of November



▲ An explosion, evidently. And some strange dalek type protrusions.



ypoint



◀ The puny ship with the peashooters is yours, unfortunately.

▼ Hmm, I think I know which of these two my money is on.



Nobody said it was gonna be easy...

Viewpoint is Norman Tebbit-hard. But there are ten things that are more difficult....

- 1) Getting out of bed of a morning.
- 2) Living with my flat-mate.
- 3) Being good at life.
- 4) Having 'just the one' in the pub.
- 5) Coming back from the pub and not watching Dyke TV on Channel 4.
- 6) Playing *Viewpoint* on the hardest setting.
- 7) Working on a magazine and having any free time whatsoever.
- 8) Concentrating on work when you've got an interview with *Loaded*.
- 9) Packing in playing *Sensible Soccer* and doing my freelance.
- 10) Persuading *Play* to give me any more work after they read this.

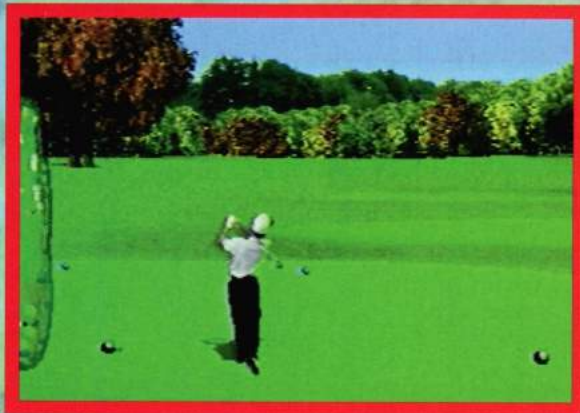
▼ One of the special weapons available is a huge wall of flame, which is ideal if you've forgotten your lighter.

PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Viewpoint:
 Value:

Played 74%
 Harder than a diamond

What's the matter, too scruffy to join a proper club? Too skint? Fear not because all you need to get into EA's prestigious outfit is £45. Ryan Butt joins up.



PGA TOUR

The PGA Tour games were excellent fun on the 16-bit consoles, especially the skins

games that allowed you to gather up a throng of semi-pissed mates to battle it out on the greens for vast wads of loot. Or, roughly about 25p a skin round our place.

The PlayStation was obviously the next port of call for the series, but how could EA possibly improve on the formula? Simple, just add loads of full motion video sequences, swap the outdated sprites with digitised characters and make the control method even trickier – the perfect formula, at least that what EA seems to think. We're not so sure.

PGA Tour '96 features enough bad haircuts, Rupert The Bear trousers and amusing head gear to enthrall any self proclaimed Tarby wannabe. It also features several of the greatest celebs from the golfing world (in other words people you've probably never heard of!) who can be selected or played against in the game's many competitions. The finest feature of this game, and indeed any other in EA's PGA series is the fact that you needn't know bugger all about the sport to enjoy it. Granted the slang is a bit perplexing at first, and it takes precision timing to hit the ball

straight, but two hours in the capable hands of the PGA posse and you'll be playing around in the rough with the best of them (isn't that right Faldo?).

Going back to the control method, I don't know if it was just my arthritis-ridden hands playing havoc with my timing or the unresponsiveness of the control pad buttons, but I could hardly ever hit the ball straight. This isn't a problem when chortling through a few rounds with your friends, but when you're up against the toughest CPU-controlled opponents in the business, it can become frustrating. Especially when you have to watch them monotonously hit green after green in regulation. Don't they ever make a mistake?

There are several different approaches to the game, including straightforward practice and tournament modes for the budding professionals, a skins game for the money motivated amongst you, and a shoot-out choice. The latter being a quick-fire three hole knockout game which is also played for money.

However, regardless of how many competitions are included here, it won't stop you from getting bored after a while because EA only saw fit to include two bloody courses! Where are all the others? There were at least nine in the Mega Drive version so why can't the mighty PlayStation

handle more? In their defence, kind of, EA are planning to release update discs containing more courses at a later date. They're obviously looking to grab an even bigger cash sandwich from apparently bread-loaded punters.

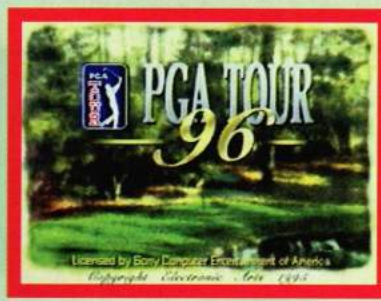
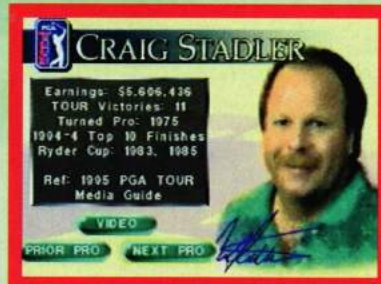
However limited in the rural countryside department though, you can't help but like this game on strength of its playability. It is incredibly easy just to pick up and play, and the next time you check the time, half a day can have elapsed without you realising it. Even if you do get fed up, the beauty of memory cards means that you can save all the standings on back-up and take up the challenge another day. My only regret is that you can't save the replays, honestly you should have seen some of my blinding putts... etc.

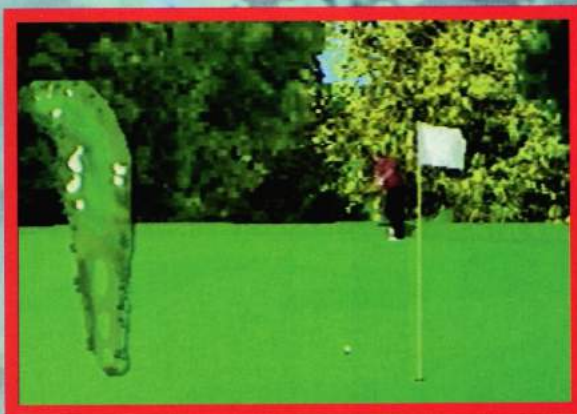
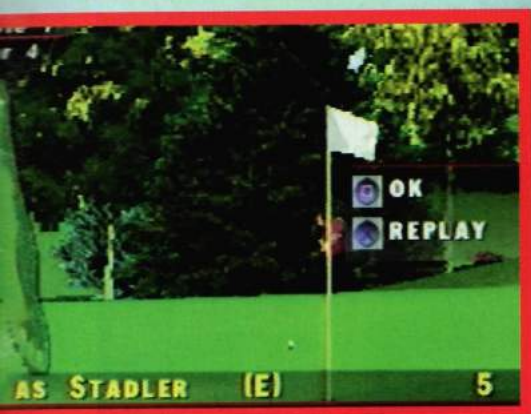


PLAY information

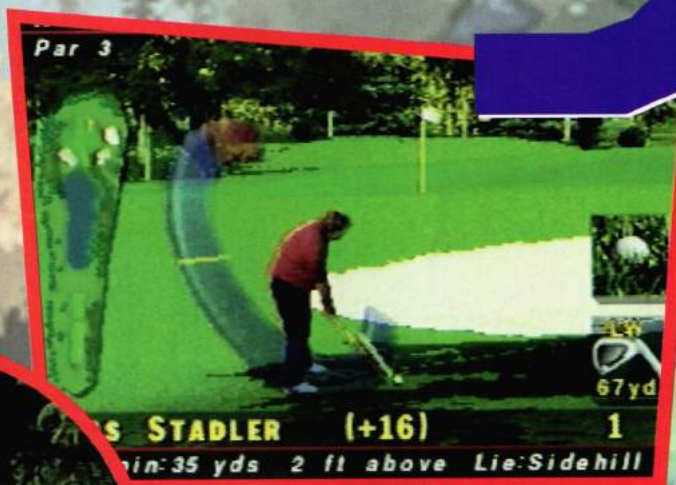
- Publisher: Electronic Arts
- Customer Support: 01753 546465
- Expected price: £45
- Expected: December

▼ "I want to be a Chippendale because..." We delve into the X-Files!





Mr 1996



◀ Perfect your swing the J.R. Hartley way!

▼ Splott! Never let your dog near the bunkers.



Will
enthrall
any
Tarby
wannabe

PLAY 
verdict

Looks: 
Sounds: 
Birdies: 
Value: 

Played 86%
Course-lacking, bogey-belting bliss

Unsung Golfing Heroes Of Our Time (part one)

You've all heard of Nick Faldo and Craig Stadler, they're in here, but what about the other golfing enthusiasts that never seem to grab the headlines, more importantly, the prime swingers that will never appear in a PGA game. Let me introduce you to...

Shakin' Stevens

The famous limb-vibrating crooner has been known to sing about green (doors that is), and when the hectic jet-setting lifestyle and screaming girties get too much for this most famous of Welshmen, he likes nothing more than playing a quiet round.

Vinny Jones

What a talented chap. Not only is our Vinny a well 'ard martial arts expert, but he also has a wicked handicap down at his local pitch and putt course. Yep, our Vinny always keeps a tight grip on his balls (not to mention Gazza's)!

Ian Botham

Famed for his charity walks and numerous appearances on *Question of Sport*, Ian first got into golf after narrowly escaping death during an operation to remove a cricket ball from his ear. He later joked "If it had been a golf ball, it wouldn't have been half as painful".

Terry Wogan

When not waffling all over the *Eurovision Song Contest*, our Tezza often sneaks off to the local course to sink a few holes and drink a few pints. When asked if he'd join the *Play* boys for a game he said "If you don't go away I'll call the police". Nice one Tezza!



PLAY+ information

Design Team: NMS
Team Leader: Jon Harrison/Steve Beverley
Where at: 75% complete
Target release: End December '96
Publisher: Virgin I.E.

Yes, pinball computer games can be kind of moderately amusing, but they're not a patch on the real thing.

Let's face it, sitting at a key board watching a 14" monitor-depiction of your fave table just doesn't come close to standing in a pub, legs apart, hands on, inadvertently thrusting against the table every time you press the flippers. Be honest, to a casual onlooker, most people playing pinball look like second rate Elvis-inspired bump and grind merchants. The real thing can be a great experience, and one which NMS are working towards emulating with *Tilt*, a multi-view, multi-table, multi-ball pinball dream on a PlayStation. And at the moment it looks like they're

producing a game which finally seems to have cracked how to depict pinball on-screen the way you see it in the pub. It's all in hi-res too, so how can it fail? Project co-leader Jon Harrison happily takes up the tale.

"Steve [the other co-leader] and I have always been really die-hard pinball

players, I mean really massive fans, I can quite happily spend hours in the pub playing a decent table, and we felt that the computer games around weren't doing pinball justice. I mean, *Pinball Fantasies* [hit on PC a while back] is a great game but there's something about it that didn't really appeal to you, like a lack of slingshots and ramps. So about two years ago Steve and I started talking down the pub about the feasibility of actually getting it right. Of actually getting a table scrolling in 3D.

"At the time NMS was about to begin work on its first original project, and we wanted to do something innovative and different. Someone suggested a pinball game, and, of course, even two years ago the comment was that it'd been done before. But then we got to thinking, well, it hasn't really, nobody has ever produced a 3D perspective, scrolling table before. So we decided we should go for it."

So why do you think no-one had tried the 3D angle before?
"I don't understand, I mean we sat there for a while and went 'it can't be done, it can't be done,

how are we going to show balls going behind things? how are we going to do this? How are we going to program that?' But we fiddled a bit, tried a few things out and eventually decided that yeah, this was possible."

Six appeal

And, two years down the line, the lads are about to be proved right. Now nearing completion, the team has produced a six table lavishly presented feast of all things pin and ball. And you can switch to a 2D viewpoint, if that's what you're more comfortable with.

The tables adopt familiar themes, and have been designed so that all levels of player will feel at home with at least two of them, as Jon explains.

"We decided early on you've got to please everybody. You've got to please the new pinball player, you've got to please the mediocre pinball player and you've got to please the fanatic, so that was the idea of having rough pairs of



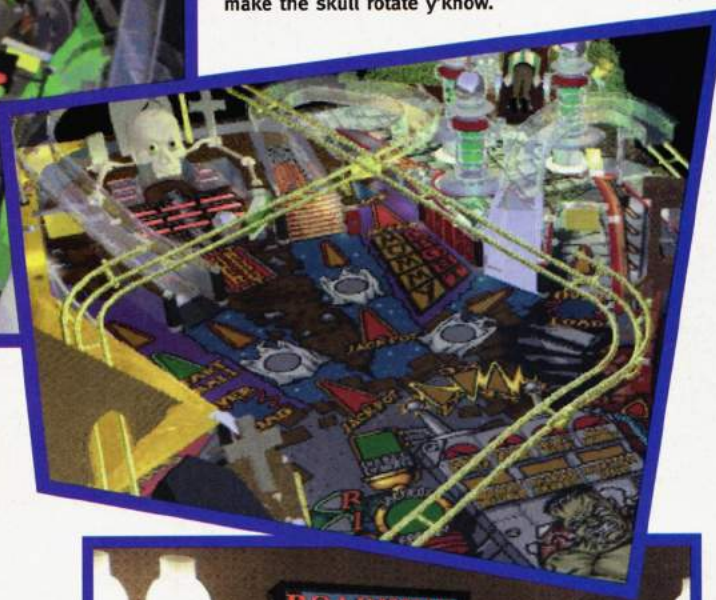
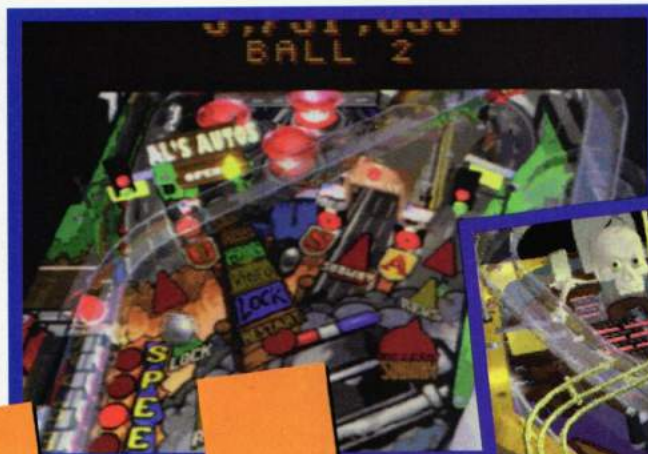
► On the **Monster** table, providing you set up the right sequence, little Frankie here springs to life to give you a shock.



Tilt

◀ Road King USA is one of the easier set-ups, but there's still plenty to keep you occupied.

▼ More monster shenanigans. You can actually make the skull rotate y'know.



Flick off!

One of the touches in *Tilt* is the use of three, four second rendered cut scenes, which Jon calls flicks. These include switches triggered by activating features and other used to vary the pace of the game's presentation. Highlights for me were watching the ball disappear down a ramp trapdoor and the display cutting to the ball rolling along the tubes underneath the table, showing off all the underside machinery and a gun game fade out, where the viewpoint changes so you're staring down the barrel of a gun – although thankfully not from the business end. Jon and Steve have been rendering them as they go over the past year, and have built up a huge bank from which they'll choose the final in-game sequences. As Jon says, "if you add in all the track mode, the selection screens, the game screens, locking balls and specialist flicks, you're still looking at quite a few flicks...there's no final figure as to how many we'll put in the final version, it's more a matter of what will fit onto the CD, but we've done well over one hundred."



► This green eyed monster sadly doesn't rear his ugly head, but it still looks pretty cool, doesn't it?



levels of difficulty." So, how it works is that Fun Fair and Road King USA, for instance, are fairly straight forward affairs with little skill shots, and a high tolerance of missed shots. The player really simply has to concentrate on shooting the main loops to lock balls and set up the multi-ball. Neat, pretty, but not too involving. Myst and Magik, and The Gangster are significantly tougher, asking the player to pull off ramp shots and more defined skill shots. The tables have also been set up to be less forgiving of slightly mis-timed flicks. To give you an example, on Fun Fair, the design means that players missing their target will have a good chance of hitting another scoring point. Also, should they miss their intended target, the ball shouldn't behave too erratically thus throwing any patterns out of kilter, forcing the player to concentrate on rescuing the ball, rather than on trying to line up another shot.

Scary Monsters

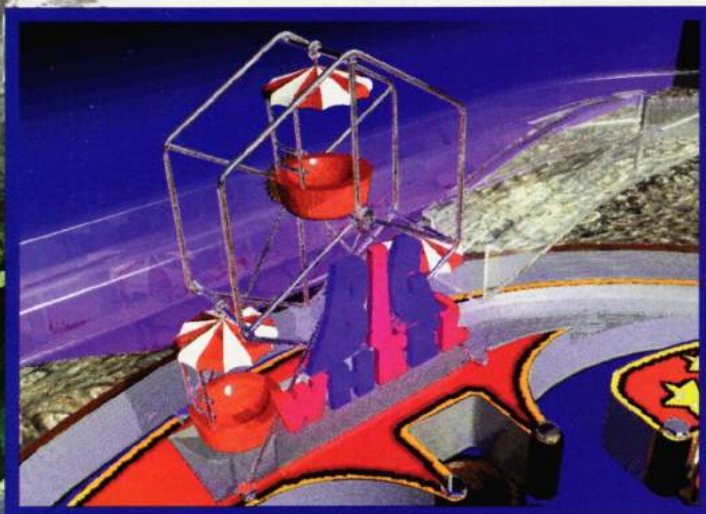
On the medium level, so to speak, target areas are more defined and the set-ups require the player to shoot one loop, then another in the opposite direction, and perhaps a ramp shot in sequence to set up features such as a multi-ball or a gun game. Then, moving on a stage further, we come to The Monster and Star Quest. These two are packed with features and not especially forgiving, having narrower target channels to shoot and plenty of obstacles on-table to screw up any patterns you devise. The Monster also seems to be NMS' favourite, the one they still play despite having worked on

the project for nearly two years, and it is certainly busy. As Jon said when he showed it off to me "it's got guillotines, generators, monster scores, coffins, even pyramids for the real aficionados. This is the one where you can actually light up the monster in the corner, and when you do the generators explode, the skull head rotates, there's so much on there it drove me crazy when I was modelling it."

Some features at this level also take a lot longer to build up and require a much higher degree of skill and patience. Actually, learning the right combination of shots seems almost a puzzle game with the main action itself, although, as described above on the Monster, the effects can be worth it if you pull it off. Cramping in everyone's favourite effects was definitely an aim for NMS.

"One the things we decided on was variety, we found the feedback we were getting went along the lines of 'I like complicated ramp shots, I like gun games', so we decided to group them up. So with the later tables you've got multi-ball strategies where you've got to build up, keep the ball in play. It's tactical, it's more of a puzzle. There's different ways to set them off, so people don't get frustrated trying to build up for one and missing out, actually there's five on one table and if you get all five you get a real cracking bonus at the end."

A big cracking bonus, eh? Now that's what it's all about. Please get it all finished soon so I can have another go guys.





The making of...

Research for a pinball game must be one of the best jobs in the world. All that travelling to pubs and arcades to check out the new tables...I dunno, and I thought I had it good. Here's how Jon described the process of gathering information. (It's best if you read it in a Brummie accent.)

"I admit it, I spend a lot of time in the pub, I live and breath pinball. I've known some bad times, but having to be stuck in a pub just about killed me!

"To start off, we had two or three pinball games delivered to the offices and stripped them down, bit by bit. We then spent over two weeks wandering in and out of various pubs and just figured there's no real reason why if they can do this in a cabinet you can't do it on a computer...we just sort of went overboard, we were that convinced it was possible.

"Originally we used 3D studio for the modelling [The final version's being done using Silicon graphics workstations]. It was a brand new copy and we just had a manual and had to sit there and figure out how it worked. So we went though it and did this stock animation and sent it in to Virgin and said 'I'm sure we can produce a 3D game' [here Jon showed me the original demo] and they went for it. It's pretty horrific looking back at this now we've been using the SGI stations for some time, but this is how the first demo was presented...it's not a patch on what we're doing now.. Originally we did a demo of the Black Lagoon [pinball table], we sat down and stripped the whole thing apart. Every part of every ramp we took apart and measured it, we just wanted to prove that swear to God, if you want to do a pinball game, you could do it right - with some effort.

"At the research stage we also spent a lot of time finding out what people expect and want from a pinball game. There's a pinball site on the Internet we used quite a lot, sending out questionnaires asking people what their favourite tables were: why do you like these tables, why do you like these features? We got all these responses.. we even had feedback from guys who worked at Bally Midway [pinball table manufacturer in the States]."

▲ Two years worth of trekking from arcade to arcade and pub to pub went into this design. Can I have a job on Tilt 2 please?

◀ They like their ugly faces at NMS. Not *their* ugly faces of course, but the ones on the table. Oh no, I've blown it, they'll never speak to me again!



Credits

Jon Harrison - co-lead artist
 Steve Beverley - co-lead artist
 Glenn Benson - lead programmer
 Matt Spall - producer (VIE)
 Alec Roger - play testing
 Lee + Mark at Alias - software support



◀ Bingo? BINGO?
What is this, video
games for grannies?
Wake up Sony!

▼ And its eyes down
for a full house. Oops,
already done the
bingo joke. Let's see,
if you hit one of the
enemy, they die.



◀ On your tail, you're mine now sucker.
I think I can work out that I need to fire
at him thanks Mr. Computer.

Air

Combat

**It was good
on import
but could
have been
better.
Sony had
the
opportunity
to improve
Air Combat
for its
official
release...
and they
blew it!**

Yes, yes we reviewed it last month (it got a useful 79 per cent), but that was *Ace Combat*, the Japanese version, and we initially hoped that our one would be different enough to warrant a re-review. Bit of a bummer, really, because the only difference is the translated text, and that wasn't even that important anyway. Still, let's add one per cent for that. *Air Combat* sounds better than *Ace Combat* too, so that's another one per cent. What's that? 81? Sounds just about right.

What a wasted opportunity, this game was initially criticised for being too basic and with all that time to improve the formula and make it a bit more in-depth, it emerges as a straight port. Bah!

Let's not get too down hearted though, because generally speaking this game is pretty good. The best way to describe it is to think of it as a 3D version of Capcom's brilliant SNES shoot 'em-up, *UN Squadron*. But, if you've never heard of that, think of it as like *Afterburner*. If you haven't heard of that, ooh, well, it's a 3D flight sim-cum-shooter for God's sake!

You fly a series of varied missions, get loads of state of the art planes at your disposal (including F-14's and Stealth Bombers) and then just go mad in the skies engaging in high-tension dog fights and dive bomb attacks on enemy production plants.

It looks brilliant, sounds top-notch (all wing-man commentary and screeching guitars!) and is instantly accessible. There are few controls to master and very little techy dials to read - all you need to know is your speed, altitude, direction and the whereabouts of the next scum bag bogey to obliterate.

Basically, though, it's just mindless aerial action that makes for a gripping week's play. By that time, though, you'll probably have completed all the missions and attempted the classic *Top Gun* upside down photography scene a zillion times (yes it can be done!).

On a more general level, it's pretty skimpy on detail, but this is thoroughly compensated for in the good all-round entertainment department.

Ultimately, *Air Combat* will have you hooked for as long as it takes to get into Kelly McGillis' pants (and how long did that take Tom Cruise?)



verdict

Looks: ██████████
Sounds: ██████████
Improvements: ██████████
Value: ██████████

Played 81%

A lobotomised tortoise could fly this!

information

- Publisher: Sony/Namco
- Customer support: 0881 505505*
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Out Now

Goal Storm



information

- Publisher: Konami
- Customer support: 01895 653000
- Expected price: £44.99
- Expected when: Late November

Since we reviewed this on import last month, something dramatic has happened and it's called *Striker '96*. Play wonders how this can possibly compete.

It had time to impress when it was the only football game around, but now that the storm has raged, sizzled and burnt itself out, the calm that dwindles in its wake is too bloody calm by half!

What *Goal Storm* lacks is longevity in any shape or form. Against the computer you could quite happily (and with considerable ease I might add) receive the ball from the goalie, dribble past the opposition's mid-field, run at their defence (no problem) dart diagonally towards the opposition's goal and wham! The ball flies into the top corner like a homing missile, bosh! The goalie hits the deck, dejected, deflated, and close to suicidal whilst your player, proud as punch, runs back into his half with arms stretched imitating some kind of jet fighter triumphantly returning to base after bombing a few peasants. A few seconds later, composure regained and ready to go, you lunge into another solo attack and bang! Déjà vu, "Cor!" thinks the player to themselves "I'm

bloomin' good at this" except that they're not. It is painfully easy for any person to pick this game up and score goals that would make Pele puke within a few minutes – and this predictable snooze factor is what lets this game down so

dramatically. Even in two-player mode each game simply resorts to a tennis like affair with both players taking it in turns to score the same goal every time, and when the scorelines read 31-29, you know for sure that it's time to change your football game.

Everything else about this game is fine (what's left? – ed). The graphics utilise super smooth polygon players than move brilliantly and possess all of the traits displayed on a real life pitch, the fouling, the play acting, the taunting – it's all here. The new and improved sound is a bit iffy though, the sound effects that were supposed to be changed still sound like the players are kicking a metal sphere around, and the commentary is somewhat wooden – where's Andy Grey when you need him? Or perhaps not.

The new national sides are a definite improvement over the obscure J-league clubs of *Winning Eleven*, and we even managed to spot a few of the top names, most noticeably Gazza with his now out-dated blonde crop.

With only one tournament mode and the lacklustre two-player game, this could hardly be considered good value for money, and we think that anyone who takes their football seriously (like we do) will be sick as a parrot with this simplified offering after a few days. Sorry Konami but we want the PlayStation equivalent of *International Superstar Soccer* now, not these half-hearted tasters that play like sloppy Subbuteo seconds.



▲ It's a free kick, and I'm going to score. Oh yes I am matey, no doubt about it.

► I reckon this guy looks like Hristo Stoichkov, the Bulgarian international.



verdict

Looks:	■■■■■■■■■■
Sounds:	■■■■■■■■■■
Doddleness:	■■■■■■■■■■
Value:	■■■■■■■■■■

Played 69%
One goal wonder

Frying Tonight

There are four beefy weapons on offer in *Philosoma*, each is extremely handy on certain levels. Here is a brief description of each bit of firepower and where it comes in most useful:

Vulcan

This is your standard (use all the time) weapon, which is pretty special as far as standard weapons go. It can chuck out loads of bullets per second and is rather handy for maiming just about anything.

1 Reverse Cannon

Only a single shooter unfortunately, but the bullets are bloody powerful and can rip through anything within a matter of seconds. It goes without saying that this is essential for killer enemies that sneakily attack from the rear.

2 Laser

This fine beam will melt anything it touches more or less instantly. It is best used for end of level bosses or anything you've got time to kill because it isn't particularly fast.

3 Photon

Charge it up and let it rip. This short, yet highly powerful burst of cosmic energy will obliterate anything in its path. Unfortunately it is rather sluggish and takes time to charge up.



Philos

Just when Ryan Butt had written off the prospect of a decent PlayStation shoot 'em-up, the oddly-named *Philosoma* arrived on the scene for a spot of frying. Smart.



Wake up! With the exception of *Loaded*, every shoot 'em-up we played last month was just about guaranteed to eventually send gamers everywhere drifting off into a comatose state, well not anymore matey.

We've got something here that oozes excitement from every pore and will make a point of grabbing you by the gonads and beating you about the face with a very wet kipper, into total submission...well not quite, but it is pretty exciting stuff.

Yep, *Philosoma* is hot stuff alright. It's a blistering roller coaster of a game that will constantly throw you into the unknown with each new level, thus ensuring that you'll be hooked until the day your PlayStation melts in the big bang.

You control an easily manoeuvrable space craft that comes equipped with four devastating weapons - handy considering some of the raging intergalactic monsters you'll be encountering on your mission. Navigating through a series of phases, your mission is to root out and destroy the evil that lurks at the ass-end of the galaxy. With each new level comes a fresh new

perspective and an entirely different look at things. One minute you'll be happily flying vertically upwards, then horizontally across, and then the whole game will magically transform into a frenzied 3D blaster. Spooky.

The whole affair is strung together with loads of FMV sequences that kick off once the token bosses have been vanquished, and this helps give the action a certain order and helps things flow along smoothly.

Graphically, *Philosoma* is the business.

Each new level offers a new view and a fresh new challenge and the standard in general noticeably increases in quality as you go on. My favourite bit was definitely the runaway train guardian which comes right out of the screen and in your face - pow! The video sequences polish things off

nicely and act as a constant reminder that this is definitely how next generation console blasters should look.

Unfortunately the sound isn't quite up to the same high standards and is pretty lame, but this doesn't significantly detract from your overall enjoyment. Make no mistake though, this is a damn cool game that you'll play to death and probably way beyond.

This is a damn cool game

PLAY information

- Publisher: Sony
- Customer support: 0882 505505*
- Expected: January '96
- Expected price: £40-£45

soma



▲ *Philosoma* makes fantastic use of full motion video inbetween levels.



2



◀ There you are cruising happily along and then all of a sudden a stinking great star destroyer blocks your flight path. God damn Sunday pilots!



3



▲ The assault above techno city is more than enough to test even the most skilled of shoot 'em-up wizards.

▼ Things start to get a little hot under the collar as you navigate your craft through a mothership's core.



PLAY verdict

Looks: ██████████
 Sounds: ██████████
 Firepower: ██████████
 Value: ██████████

Played 85%
 The stuff films are made of

*Sony customer support line is charged at 39p/min (peak) 25p/min (off peak)

Total Ec

Bonnie Tyler sang about one of the heart in the eighties, but will the Ryan be singing the praises of this *Total Eclipse* of the PlayStation?

Straight after the gut-wrenching nightmare of *Off World* *Interceptor* comes *Total Eclipse Turbo*, a game that utilises the same swirly games engine to produce a mapcap terrain that just can't keep itself still.

Instead of racing around in a moon buggy on this occasion though, you take to the air in a combat craft complete with blazing cannons and a nifty smart bomb that rips through the on-coming canyons like a nuclear whirlwind.

The 20 levels on offer are set out pretty standardly. Fly over the planets surface blasting interceptors and gun turrets, and then enter a special portal that zaps you straight underground for some real puke-evoking claustrophobic tunnels sequences that ooze confusion in large doses – I myself was sweating rather nervously by the time fresh air entered my nostrils once again.

After five levels you'll get the opportunity to take on a mega guardian with the reward

(if successful) of ascending to the next planet to tackle a fresh new challenge.

On the 3DO this was billed as being "one of the smoothest, slickest shoot 'em-ups yet seen", if only the port over to PlayStation could have been as fluid. What we've got here is a jerky, stodgy shooter that looks really bad for a PlayStation game. As with *Off World*

Interceptor, much of the intricate detail has been wiped in favour of speed, but the result this time is very poor. Admittedly, the various terrain's are produced quite well, and the way in which your craft weaves in and out of mountains and can rise and duck below other hazards adds a certain excitement to the

proceedings. I also liked the way you can press the top buttons and go into a frenzied spin and squeeze through narrow gaps, but this eventually only adds to the confusion.

The presentation is brushed-up thanks to some very nice full motion video sequences that run between planets – giving the game an epic cinematic feel about it.

The main problem with *Total Eclipse Turbo*, apart from the giddiness it generates is the boring repetitive nature of the gameplay. Everything is just so standard. You get a certain amount of freedom to decide upon your route through the network of mountains and ravines that make up the planet surfaces, but even then you still feel like nodding off.

There aren't enough exciting weapons and varied enemies to attack, just dodgy-looking flying horseshoes and wierd floating balls.

It's mainly the graphics that drag this game down because once you clap eyes on these rancid pixels you can never quite get into the swing of things... the fact that your cannons seem a trifle off-target don't add much to your enjoyment of the game either.

I suppose *Total Eclipse Turbo* can be classed as enjoyable for a while, but it won't take long before that anxiety starts to loom over you that yes, perhaps you should have bought *Philosoma*, or *Rapid Reload* or something, anything else! Then you'll look up, have another glance at this, and start scrambling around for the receipt and the number of the local games exchange shop.

Clap eyes on these rancid pixels



▲ Feeling claustrophobic yet? As you hurtle through the underground tunnels, avoid scraping your wings on the side.



PLAY Information

- Publisher: BMG
- Customer support: 0171 384 7864
- Price: £39.99
- Expected when: Out Now

Eclipse Turbo



◀ These structures may look menacing, but a few well-placed shots will demolish them.



▲ Shoot the mechanical doors to prevent them from closing. Once they're shut there's no way through.



PLAY verdict

Looks:
 Sounds:
 Claustrophobia:
 Value:

Played 69%
 Totally eclipsed by confusion

Twinbee Deluxe Pack

What a frenzied feast of shoot 'em-up fun this bargain pack

produces. Splicing together two rip roaring blast-a-thons sounds like a plan to get you buzzing away until Christmas. It's doesn't work though, because these games are dead easy!

Like *Parodius*, the action involves little more than collecting power-ups, demolishing herds of strange space beings, eventually dying and then restarting at the point at which you left off. It is great fun at first and the package is packed full of warped elements that you can't help but smile at, but the enjoyment is sadly short lived and once you've zapped through this a couple of times you'll probably never touch the disc again. Sad, but true.



information

- Publisher: Konami
- Customer support: 01895 653000
- Price: £69.99
- Expected when: Now (import)



▼ This is one lass that understands that fact that looks can kill.



▲ How many other shooters boast a troop of levitating, multi-coloured pussy cats?

Played 65%

A temporary burst of insanity

Hermie Hopperhead

The winner of this month's most obscure import game goes to this strange offering from the States. It centres around a quirky young scamp with a hair cut from hell who skips around platform land pursued by walking eggs. The idea is to simply bounce on baddies and collect stars to beef-up your pre-hatched companions, thus making them more able to perform the tasks needed to get you through the levels. The idea may be a novel one, but this is executed with all the style and sophistication of a crusty caveman. It looks no better than a very average SNES platformer and although we searched long and hard for any elements even vaguely resembling next gen, we gave up once we clapped eyes on the poorly-drawn, cardboard bosses. Light hearted fun for a while but nowhere near acceptable.

information

- Publisher: Sony of America
- Customer support: No UK number
- Price: £69.99
- Expected when: Now (import)



Played 53%

Out of date, harmless pap

King Bowling

information

- Publisher: Coconuts
- Customer support: No UK number
- Price: £69.99
- Expected when: Now (import)



▲ The egg-man prepares to play ball.



I wasn't expecting *King Bowling* to be perfect, but it could have been a bit more lively than this.

Like most Japanese import titles, you take your chances with the reams of text that are hurled at you, and unfathoming this lot takes time and a whole lot of patience. My method involved randomly clicking around until anything even remotely resembling a game emerged. When it did, horrified, I realised that randomly clicking through the endless text pages was actually far more enjoyable!

I suppose you can only make bowling so complicated, but all you have to do to strike here is gauge an incredibly easy power and accuracy meter. It should not be this easy.

Played 37%

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With the advent of the Sony PlayStation, we have undeniably entered into the next age of videogaming and into a bright new world of hyperreal interactive entertainment. Games, in this exciting new era, are no longer produced as they were 15 years ago, in the heydays of the first home computers. Today, the videogames industry produces software backed with multi-million pound budgets.

The market for videogames in the home is rocketing as each year passes and new technology allows for bigger, brighter, better games and new experiences in a world where the mind and machine are evermore interfaced. No longer the pursuits of a small group of adolescent youths, videogames are now firmly instilled into society very much as part of youth lifestyle. With games nowadays being totally immersive, combining a perfect synergy of music, video and interactive feedback, we are firmly in the realms of an ongoing cultural phenomenon...

In the first part of this feature, I will be looking the methods employed by two of the biggest producers of PlayStation games, namely Psygnosis/Sony Interactive and Electronic Arts, in how they produce such massive games like *Wipeout* and the *Wing Commander* series. Next month, the feature will take a look at the ways two of the smaller, independent design teams renowned for their creativity produce their games, and will look at the merits of the two different approaches.

Work, and

Gone are the days when games were produced by inspired individuals working slavishly on a hot keyboard, burning the midnight oil in a coffee-stenched darkened room (we're the only ones who still do that). Today, games are massive projects executed by teams of people in offices manufacturing product after product for consumption by an evergrowing and eager market. At least, that's what Asam Ahmad discovered when he quizzed two of the biggest names in the business, Electronic Arts and Sony Interactive.

The Liverpool likely lads

Psygnosis take a very profound interest in the games they produce. Comprised of as many as 13-14 in-house programming teams located in their offices in Liverpool and dotted around the country, they have produced, and are working on some of the best PlayStation games going. Their philosophy towards the creation of games employs an approach that learns from its mistakes. It is certainly true that not all of their games have been big successes, like *Microcosm* on the Amiga and *Novastorm* on the PlayStation, but from Psygnosis' pragmatic point of view, these games are not so much failures than important learning grounds for newer projects. Indeed, without the time and effort put into the above, admittedly mediocre games, we would not have had the groundbreaking *Wipeout*.

Today, the total time involved in a game's development, from inception to end, can be as long as two years. Within this period of time, for the first few months or so, the ideas for a game come to fruition, but it can be as long as eight to ten months in development before there is anything tangible to see on the screen. Even at this stage, none of the

gameplay is actually in place, just low-level graphics engines and basic control systems. It can take another eight to ten months after this stage to perfect the game, in design, story and control.

Meet the gang

Of the 12, or so, people that work on a game, there are typically four main programmers, around three to four graphics artists, a musician, a person for extraneous coding such as intro sequences, the main game designer and a producer to oversee the whole project. But it's not all coding and game design, there are many other people that work on games, not least in the evaluations department.

Psygnosis' invest a lot of time in ensuring that their games will be well received, and put a lot of effort into market research for their products. To this end, people from the surrounding areas, covering a broad cross-section of the youth community, are often invited in to play their games in the alpha/beta stages. The games on the shelves are one up from the beta version. This kind of feedback is essential in Psygnosis' eyes, as ultimately, it is you guys who will buy the games.



Test Play

In many ways the firm employ a hands-on approach to programming, and aren't afraid of experimenting with new techniques. Ideas are always put down on paper before a game starts being coded, but they are not carved in stone. What they do pride themselves on is the creativity they put into their products. In *Wipeout*, for example, they feel that they have produced a better game than they originally thought possible. There were obviously things that they couldn't include due to technical restrictions, but still, there were many things that the PlayStation allowed them to do that, conventionally, would have been practically impossible before now.

Psygnosis' commitment to videogames is reflected in the success that their products have had, especially over the

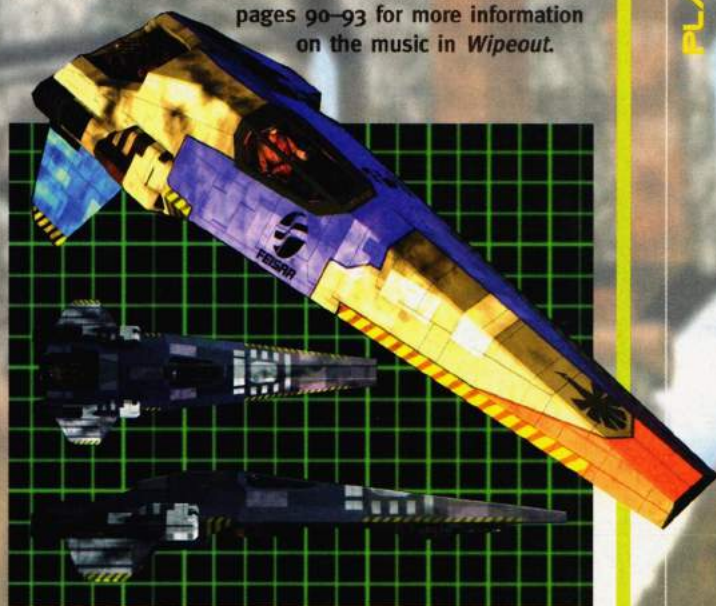
last two years or so, during which the company has transformed from a medium-sized publisher into one of the major players in the industry. Sony's buy-out reflects how important creative software houses like Psygnosis are in the videogames field. With some of the most innovative games ever devised in their portfolio, Psygnosis are going from strength to strength, particularly now with the majority of their releases for the PlayStation ahead of Sony Computer Entertainment's own products in the software sales charts.

How much?

Without doubt, videogames in this consumer age are big business. Indeed, costs for producing a high profile game like *Wipeout* were upwards of £400,000 and, depending on licensing deals, might even be up to around £750,000 or more now, and all this for a single game! These costs are just for development, and advertising on top of this can be in the region of around £600,000, if not more, across Europe, comprising of many forms of promotion, including cinema commercials. Obviously, not all games cost this huge amount of money to develop.

In order to get the whole concept of a game right, Psygnosis even went as far as recruiting an external agency to shape the look and feel of all the visuals. With millions of colours available at high resolution on the new consoles, it is imperative to ensure any potential is tapped. In this case, Designers' Republic produced the whole package for *Wipeout*, from the logo to the design of the ships.

In the case of sound, *Wipeout* features tracks from some of the best contemporary musicians in the dance music arena, including *Leftfield* and *Orbital*. Check out the second part of our 'Definition of Sound' feature on pages 90-93 for more information on the music in *Wipeout*.

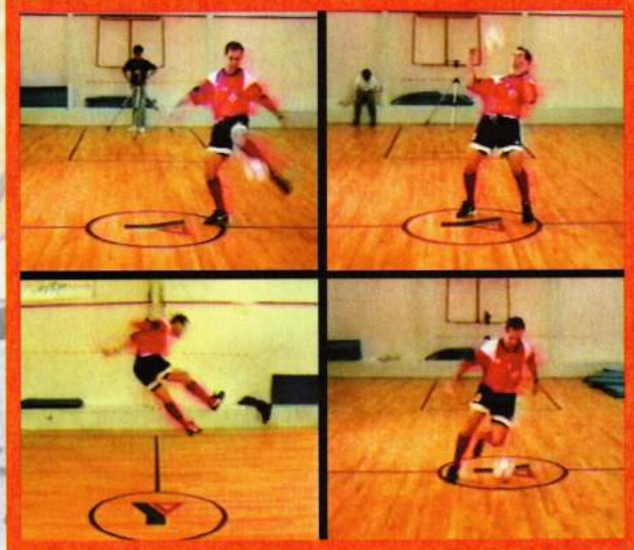


Employing the services of the Designers' Republic meant that *Wipeout* not only played well, but looked superb too.

Many games that the firm produce have much smaller budgets, but despite this, at every opportunity the teams always experiment with what they can and can't do with a game. This means that if the game doesn't do as well as the bigger titles, at least something has been gained through the programming learning progress. It is this passion for programming and development that has made Psygnosis the force it is today.



With the sheer graphics power that the PlayStation offers to artists and coders, it is getting easier and easier to produce life-like character animation. With all this power, many games these days are making use of motion-capture technology to computerise real actors' or players' movements to provide some of the most realistic graphics ever seen on consoles. The process involves using real humans with special reflectors stuck on to them in specific places. Computers then monitor the motion of these discs and record the motions that are made. The sequences are then strung together and the humans represented by wireframe until the motion has been perfected. At this stage, the 'skin' is rendered on to the characters, with the end result being incredibly lifelike character motion in the game.



▲ These stills show how the Motion Capture system works. Using computers, the players' moves in FIFA '96 are 'captured' and then reproduced in the game.



▲ Wireframe graphics are the first stage after digitisation. Then, a 3D 'net' model of the player is created once the motion has been finalised...



▲ finally, the character has a 'skin' put on to it, which is either texture mapped or shaded. Voila!

Art for arts sake

Electronic Arts (EA) is one of the biggest players in the videogames industry, with offices in the UK, Europe, Canada and the US. The manner in which they produce games is somewhat different to Psygnosis, not in a better or worse way, just different. Where the former takes more of a hands-on approach to programming, getting their hands dirty with code and seeing what they can do with their games, EA follow a far more regimented production method. This is not to say that the creative element in their games is constricted in any way by procedure, rather that their approach to games production is more strictly defined from the word 'go'.

When EA produce a game, the first stage in its implementation is to produce a technical document outlining all the different ideas for the game, and how all the various pieces of code are going to be developed. This involves discussing with the programmers what is technically possible to do and incorporates proposals for how the game will be directed. In this way, the game is heavily scripted before production. This has advantages in that there are already guidelines in place when the whole project gets underway, but is less flexible than Psygnosis' approach where a game's concepts are developed in tandem with the programmers during the actual coding stage.

Solid Foundations

Perhaps the biggest reason for this more structured approach is the number of big licensed games they produce. Games such as those from the EA Sports stable, like best-selling FIFA football series, due to the their endorsements have to be developed in accordance with certain criteria, and in this sense must ensure certain guidelines are followed. By outlining games before production starts, deals between the licensor and EA, the licensee, are made much less painlessly, and accommodations can be made at a much earlier stage.

A game such as FIFA '96, coming out shortly on the PlayStation, predominantly

due to its licence agreement has a far bigger promotional budget than a unlicensed game such as *Wipeout*. FIFA's whopping £1 million for advertising, including television and radio space, may seem a lot of money, but EA have a few even bigger cherries on their cake. *Wing Commander IV*, due out on the PlayStation around Spring '96, has a production budget of \$10 million (around £6 million). With a storyline not too dissimilar to George Lucas'

Star Wars, *WC-IV* is based on a specially scripted film, which even stars Mark Hamill (but unfortunately not his dad, Darth Vader).

Typically on a game like FIFA '96, there are around 12 people that work on all the various aspects of the game. With *WC-IV*, the game was developed by a 25-strong team, plus another 100 or so for the film side, including film crews and make-up artists. It is amazing to think how much money goes into productions like these, but ultimately, quality tells.

Play the game

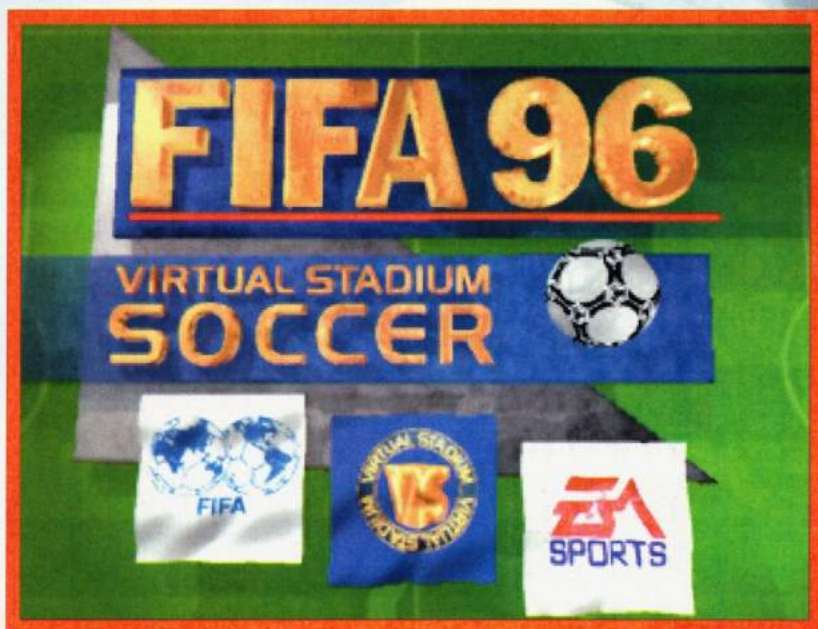
Another aspect of creating licensed games is the attention to detail that must be paid to all the features in the game. One of EA Sports' slogans is 'It's in the game.' This little phrase reflects their complete philosophy on how much of the real sport they are representing – if it's in the game, it's in the game. It seems to work. EA Sports have consistently produced chart hits over the last few years.

The actual time it takes for a game to be developed at EA is similar to that at The firm. Within the 18 month production period, however, it can take up to until about two to three months before the end of the schedule before the game hits the alpha prototype stage.

After 15 months in development the game is still bugged and goes through a month of playtesting. This takes it to beta stage, where most of the bugs are ironed out, normally about a month before it's finished.

Once final bugs have been removed and marketing have got all the promotional material ready, the game is sent for duplication about six weeks before it appears on the shelves.





▲ The £1 million spend on advertising FIFA '96 covers everything from magazines to TV. With Xmas looming, expect to see adverts for big games like this very soon.

A fistful of dollars

With the videogames industry being big business these days, it is not difficult to see why these amounts of money are spent in game development. Consumers now demand more and more polished products, and with the potential available for very high quality games these days on the ultra-powerful next-generation consoles, software houses are obliged to make sure their games make the grade. The costs for features like full-motion video and band-produced music scores can tally up to ridiculous amounts, and it has to be said that they provide little more than feel to the game. The really vital work still goes into producing the best possible game engine.

Next month, in the concluding part of this feature, I will be taking a look at how two of the smaller 'art-house' games producers work. Commonly, their production spends may be but a fraction of what the larger software houses splash out on, but this doesn't necessarily mean that their games are in any way inferior. The main areas that these passionate games creators focus on is the gameplay, rather than on extra features such as licences. To this end, some of the most innovative software ever produced has been from small teams of programmers working independently from the commercial mainstream.

Tune in next month...

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Station Master

Hey,

The Station Master listens. The survey's from issue one had just started flooding in as we went to press, and one of the things most requested was more cheats. He wasn't sure but we eventually persuaded him to get back to work and search out a load more. As well as all that, there's part two of our *Wipeout* Guide, a look round *Theme Park* and the full round down on how to score tens of goals at *WIS's Striker '96*. Say "thank-you Station Master".

NBA Jam T.E

To get the following cheats, you must do them on the "Tonight's Match Up" screen and tap them in the correct order.

Big Head Mode

▶ Square, X, Circle, Triangle continuously.

Mammoth Head Mode

▶ Square, Triangle, Circle, X continuously

Baby Mode

▶ Square, Circle continuously

Huge Mode

▶ Triangle, X continuously

Powerup Dunks

▶ Left, Right, X, Circle, Circle, X.

Powerup Fire

▶ Down, Right, Right, Circle, Triangle, Left.

Powerup Defence

▶ Right, Up, Down, Right, Down, Up.

Powerup 3PTS

▶ Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Down, Up.

Manpower

▶ Right, Right, Left, Right, X, X, Right.

Quick Hands

▶ Left, Left, Left, Left, Circle, Right.



Wipeout

Access Rapier class

If you are unable to succeed at the Venom class and experience the extra thrill of Rapier, then do the following to get straight to the speedier action. Hold tight!

- A) Highlight one player on the startup screen
- B) Hold down all of the following buttons:
L2, R2, Left on the D-pad, Start and Select.
- C) Keep holding them and press the X button. This should take you to the class screen. Now you can get down to some serious racing!



Hidden Track!!!

This is a top cheat to allow you to get another track called "Firestar". You would only normally get it by completing all the tracks in the Rapier class. Well now you don't need to. It's fast, bendy and pretty darn fun!

- A) Highlight one player on the startup screen.
- B) Hold down all of the following buttons:
L1, R1, Right on the D-pad, Start, Square and Circle.
- 3) While still holding the above press X.



Mortal Kombat 3



Kombat Codes!!!

Mortal Kombat codes were first in the arcade. They only work in two player mode, though, so you'll need a mate to help key them in right.

They allow such cheats as Dark Kombat (scrapping in the dark, strangely enough) to fighting end of game bosses. You can only use one code at a time though. To get things going, tap the relevant listing in on the Vs screen until you match up the right symbols in the six boxes at the bottom of the screen, as shown below. Each player has three boxes to take care of. Some codes only need one changed, some two, some will need all three.

You'll know if it's worked, as the description of the code flashes at the start of each bout.

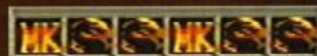
Word of warning, you only have a brief amount of time to do this in, so be quick, or the game will load before you have a chance to input the code.

Cheat Menu

Turn on the game, then using the first controller tap in X, L1, L2 whilst the second copyright screen (the one after the logo) is on-screen. You should then hear a strange noise. The rotating MK3 logo screen then appears. Instead of pressing start on the KOMBAT icon, press up on the D-pad and you should now see the cheat menu.

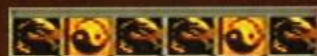
Disable Throwing

Pad 1: Tap Square x1
Pad 2: Tap Square x1



Disable Blocking

Pad 1: Tap Triangle x2
Pad 2: Tap Triangle x2



Half Energy for Player One

Pad 1: Tap Triangle x3, Circle x3.



Half Energy for Player Two

Pad 2: Tap Triangle x3, Circle x3.



Quarter Energy for Player One

Pad 1: Tap Square x7, Circle x7.



Quarter Energy for Player Two

Pad 2: Tap Square x7, Circle x7.



No Life Bars

Pad 1: Tap Square x9, Triangle x8, Circle x7.
Pad 2: Tap Square x1, Triangle x2, Circle x3.



No Fear

Pad 1: Tap Square x2, Triangle x8, Circle x2.
Pad 2: Tap Square x2, Triangle x8, Circle x2.



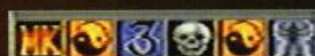
Theatre of Magic

Pad 1: Tap Square x9, Triangle x8, Circle x7.
Pad 2: Tap Square x6, Triangle x6, Circle x6.
(Gives hints for a Midway pinball game!)



No Knowledge

Pad 1: Tap Square x1, Triangle x2, Circle x3.
Pad 2: Tap Square x9, Triangle x2, Circle x6.
(Displays a text message only)



Unlimited Run

Pad 1: Tap Square x4, Triangle x6, Circle x6.
Pad 2: Tap Square x4, Triangle x6, Circle x6.



Randper Kombat

Pad 1: Tap Square x4, Triangle x6.
Pad 2: Tap Square x4, Triangle x6.
(Fighters randomly morph into other characters)



Dark Kombat

Pad 1: Tap Square x6, Triangle x8, Circle x8.
Pad 2: Tap Square x4, Triangle x2, Circle x2.
(Screen is dark but flashes briefly when someone scores a hit)



Psycho Kombat

Pad 1: Tap Square x9, Triangle x8, Circle x5.
Pad 2: Tap Square x1, Triangle x2, Circle x5.
(Combination of Dark Kombat and Randper Kombat)



Play Galaga

Pad 1: Tap Square x6, Triangle x4, Circle x2.
Pad 2: Tap Square x4, Triangle x6, Circle x8.
(Play a brief game of Galaga. Three lives, any button fires)



Fight Smoke

Pad 1: Tap Square x2, Circle x5.
Pad 2: Tap Square x2, Circle x5.
(The winner of round one gets to fight Smoke)



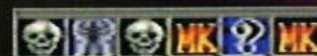
Fight Noob Salbot

Pad 1: Tap Square x7, Triangle x6, Circle x9.
Pad 2: Tap Square x3, Triangle x4, Circle x2.
(The winner of round one gets to fight Noob Salbot)



Fight Motaro

Pad 1: Tap Square x9, Triangle x6, Circle x9.
Pad 2: Tap Square x1, Triangle x4, Circle x1.
(The winner of round one gets to fight Motaro)



Fight Shao Kahn

Pad 1: Tap Triangle x3, Circle x3.
Pad 2: Tap Square x5, Triangle x6, Circle x4.
(You guessed it, the winner of round one gets to fight Shao Kahn)



Street Fighter: The Movie

► Select Akuma

During street character selection, put your cursor on Guile. Input this sequence quickly!!! Up, R1, Down, L2, Right, L1, Left, R2. If successful, Akuma will appear in the portrait window.



Rapid Reload

► Level Select

Watch the opening demo through once. Then, at the title screen, hold down L1+L2+R1+R2 (on top of the pad) and Select. The "Push Start" should change to "Secret Code" with two letters behind it. The left letter is changed with U or D, the right letter is changed with T or X. Then the settings are as follows:

MA	Stage 2	UT	Stage 3
RH	Stage 4	MK	Stage 5
HT	Stage 6		

The Raiden Project

► Adjust Resolution

During the game, hold the top four buttons together. This brings up a screen which allows you to adjust the resolution and move the screen around to your liking, and gives you a few other things to play about with.

Zero Divide

► Secret game of Phalanx

Hold down Start and Select on the pad when you switch on the machine. After a while, a title screen for the SNES shoot 'em-up Phalanx should appear and will let you play the full game. Fire away!

Parodius Various Cheats

► Invincibility

Pause the game and press T, T, X, X, O, S, O, S, D, and L. If this is done correctly, you will hear a sound. Repeating the code turns it off.

► Max Power

Pause the game and press U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, X, and O. If this is done correctly you will hear a sound. This code can be repeated at any time.

► Level Select

At the title screen press Square x5, Triangle x7, and Circle x3.

Dragon Ball Z

► More Characters

To get more characters to fight with in this Jap import beat 'em-up, just press Up, Triangle, Down, X, Left, L1, Right and R2. If you get a new title screen, you would have done it right and you will have more characters to choose from.

Cybersled

► Five New Sleds

When you see "Press Start Button" on the title screen, push the following buttons to access five more Sleds:- Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Triangle, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up and then Circle. If you hear an explosion, you will know that you have done the cheat correctly. Now when you go to select your sleds, move to the far right and there will be five more to choose from!



Battle Arena Toshinden

► Play as final boss SHO

To get Sho, you will first have to enter the Gaia code which is:- On the title screen, press Down, Down, Right, Right, then Weak Slash. Go to the option screen where you select characters and select Eiji. Now press up until Gaia's face appears. Now if you want to get Sho, do the following:-

On 1P, wait for the intro to finish, then do a fireball motion with square while the options such as "1p game" "vs human" etc are going from left to right. Wait through the demo and intro again and perform a dragon punch motion on the 2P pad using the square again. If you have done these correctly, you will hear a sound sample of "Fight".

Then begin a game, pressing either Up and X for Eiji, Down and X on Kayin to play as Gaia and Sho.

Cruising for a Bruising

(part two)

OK, you should now know which team suits you best and have mastered the first few tracks, so here's the concluding part of our *Wipeout* guide.

Remember, the whole guide can be found on the *Play* pages on Paragon On-Line, our Internet service. You can reach us at www.paragon.co.uk/play

Even though your primary objective isn't to totally blow the living daylights out of the other competitors, the various weaponry is an important tactical element. The weapons come in the form of power-ups situated on the track, which you pick up as your craft passes over the symbol. They're placed randomly, but all can be put to good use.

Blasting the opposition - the power-up guide!

1

Shield

Best used when you hear that another competitor has a deadly weapon. Otherwise, you're best using the shield up and concentrating on doing some damage yourself. When the shield is active, you can pick up other power-ups, but they cannot be activated until your shield has been used up.

2

Turbo Boost

When used at the right time, the Turbo Boost comes in quite useful. But never attempt pressing that button near a corner. Best on straights, but not on jumps. Also comes in quite handy if you have it near the end of the race to overtake at the last minute.

3

Mines

Someone is up your rear? (pardon?) Then release these and they'll be sure to disappear. The mines are despatched in five's and unless they hit something on their way out, will explode automatically after a few seconds. Not much use when you're stuck in last position though.

4

Shock Waves

If you hear this, and it's not because you've released it, prepare for a bumpy ride. Try twisting and turning to avoid getting hit because (surprise, surprise) it slows you down rapidly. On offence, try and use when on a straight or up close between corners.

5

Rockets

Use when directly in line with the opponent ahead, or on a long straight. Try to work out what the opponents next movement will be, as your weapon flies straight. Remember, the rocket has to get to its target and leaders with good hearing have time to take evasive action.

6

Missiles

One up on rockets in that you actually have a sight to line up your intended victim. But, again, they fly straight and can be quickly dodged unless, of course, you're firing from point blank range. Now there's an idea... missiles are generally more effective used on all the straights.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Track Guide

Following on from last issue's three, here's the last trio of troublesome tracks to deal with.

Korodera

power-ups and speed-ups. Take the corners very steadily, and even more steadily when you go into Rapier class, where the extra speed demands a lot of skill and air-brakes. Once you've mastered the corners, it's simple. But then, what isn't?



If you like night racing, you're sure to like this one. More than just dead set on having little light around it, Korodera makes it tougher by carrying a rather nice variety of jumps, hills and bends, plus a fair amount of

Amidos IV

Set your finger on the accelerator and you'll constantly be bumped up and down like when you were a kid (remember those baby bouncer things?). Then on, right, left handers will have you twisting and turning your body until you require a straight jacket. It's light, very fast and when you're progressed beyond Venom class racing, the track takes on a totally new meaning, with the extra speed making barrier-dodging even more difficult.



Silverstream

OK, some of the previous tracks are challenging, but this one just takes the mickey. You might think that an icy track would prove no problem for a craft suspended above the ground, well, it seems to be quite the opposite. Speed-ups are purposely put on an upcoming bend. This is a tough nut to crack, but persevere and eventually you can enjoy the pleasure of sitting back, popping a beer and watching your mates flounder as they try and get round.



Things can only get better

1 Master each track on single race mode. You can't select a track on championship mode, so get used to each track beforehand. This way, when you are ready to battle it out for good, you will have a fair chance of winning!

2 When taking a corner, watch the horizon and plan your line – take it earlier rather than later. You will notice that the craft tend to drift off course. If you start taking a corner early on, you should slide into an acceleration or another corner (if so, repeat the same process).

3 Rather than just wasting your power-ups, try to use them effectively. If you're going to waste a rocket, then waste it on a straight. You never know, you might score an unexpected hit!

4 On jumps with straights after them. Don't wiggle around in the air, because if you do, you will end up hitting a barrier. Not a good idea. Also, using the turbo boost on a jump can often lead to overshooting or hitting some kind of barrier in the air. This will halt your progress as the rescue ship comes to place you back on the track.

5 Only use the turbo-boost power-up when on a straight or on very shallow bends, any other cocky tricks are bound to result in disaster.

6 Brief taps on the pad prove better than longer holds, as the handling of all craft is sensitive to the touch. This way it is easier to correct your line quickly and safely.

7 Sometimes, trying to steer for power-ups can lead to crashes. Ultimately, it is better to keep going fast than to steer into a wall whilst trying to get a weapon or speed pad. When you have perfected your line on a track and have memorised the positions of the power-ups, you will be able to adjust your positioning so that you never need to steer for them again.

8 Use the NeGcon twisty controller with the game. It makes handling a lot easier.

Air Brakes

Useful, but tricky. The air brakes allow you to take corners at an easier rate and are best used with fast vehicles or in the Rapier class. Otherwise, like with craft with easy handling, they aren't really needed. When you use them, make sure that you give your craft enough time to drift around the corner. Then you will be able to accelerate away rather than shunting into a hard barrier.

Fast Start

Rather than just waiting for the word "go" to sound and then whacking your finger on the acceleration button, you can get a faster start for your craft by revving up the meter from the third block from the top of the acceleration meter (at bottom right of the screen). When you hear "go", you are safe to put full whack on and begin your race. If you go over the third block from the top, you will start as normal.

Getting started in *Theme Park*... The best advice for newcomers to the game is to go through the tutorial stage. The tutorial takes you through the basics of the game, showing you how to place your various rides and stalls, how to structure your park, and actually provides you with a good place to continue building your empire.

General Guidelines

The customer is always right! Your park is there for the kids to enjoy and revel in, therefore you must pay particular attention to what they say. If many of the children in a particular area are hungry or are unhappy about the prices of rides or stalls, you must act accordingly to ensure your park stays popular with them.

The nature of *Theme Park* is such that many things need constant attention or need careful looking after to ensure smooth operation. For this reason it is better to gradually build up your park slower, rather than faster, so that you don't end up out of your depth with a park spiralling out of control. Letting your park slip can mean unhappy people and rides blowing up through lack of attention.

Theme

Despite its apparent simplicity, *Theme Park* is actually a complex little game to master. *Play* takes you for a beginner's ride and shows you how to turn your *Theme Park* into a dream park.



Park Guide

Top Tips

When designing your park, it is a good idea to slow the speed right down in order that you have time to plan the layout and have more 'time' to deal with any problems that are bound to occur.

1 More rides generate more money and a large variety of different rides is better than lots of the same. Ensuring that there is a decent variety of rides means the little people stay more contented. Also, always try to buy new rides as they become available. This will help you win the 'Most Advanced' park award.

When a ride is getting old, it is sometimes better to replace the ride with a new one rather than keep repairing it. This also saves on your mechanic's workload, especially when the rides get really ancient.

2 Well placed shops can provide an enormous amount of income, but you must also watch out for the litter that is generated near them. Make sure you have enough handymen!

Always have the stock on order for your shops. This way you can ensure that they never have to close the doors. If things aren't selling, you can still delay the order by changing it.

3 Stalls are also good for income, but make sure you don't exploit the kids. If the stalls cost too much and the prizes aren't worth the effort, the children will soon feel conned and stop playing.

4 Don't underestimate the value of aesthetic features such as trees and lakes. Apart from making the park look better, you are much more likely to win awards.

5 Handymen should be employed as soon as litter appears. Keep an eye on them though – they are not the cleverest of people and can often miss areas to clean up. Use the navigation system to point them back on to the right track.

6 Mechanics also need to be managed well to make sure the rides run smoothly. Again, like the handymen, they can be a little wayward and definitely need overseeing to make sure they do their jobs properly.

7 Entertainers should be placed near long queues to relieve the stress of having to wait to go on a ride. Also, it is wise to place an entertainer near the entrance to the park so that he can hand out umbrellas to the people when it starts raining.

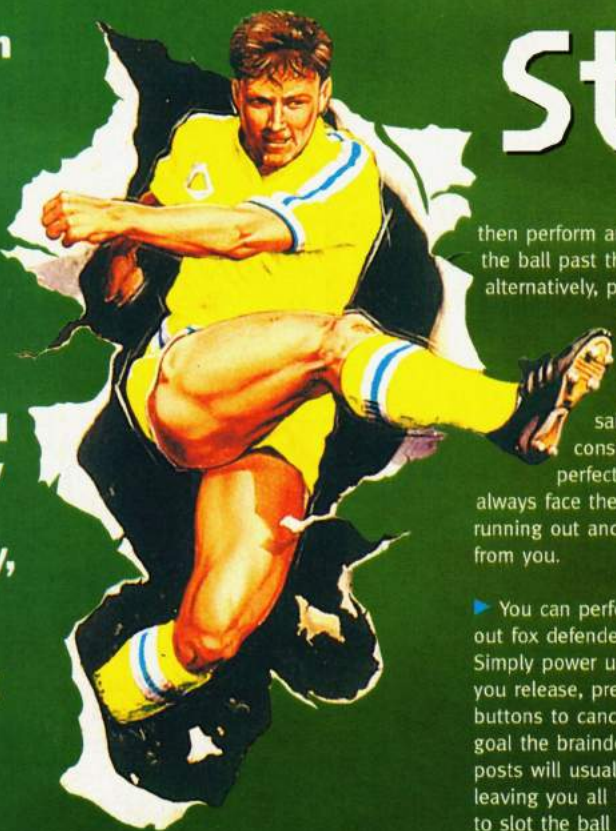
8 If you find that your rides start breaking down rapidly, and your entertainers get beaten up, it's time to hire some guards. The guards will help stop the thugs from causing an affray.



After our highly favourable review last month, we've been hacking away on *Striker '96* ever since and as a result we reckon we've got pretty damn good at it. So good in fact that we've decided to further inflate our collective ego and tell you lot how to play it. Yep, cheesy, degrading and patronising to the extreme, here is the **Play guide to scoring scorchers in the ultimate PlayStation football game (oh by the way, we did have a smidgen of help from Rage!).**

Goal!

How to net the ball in Striker '96



then perform an overhead kick to knock the ball past the near post. Or alternatively, place the targeting cross between the penalty spot and the six yard box and then perform a diving header as the ball sails in. This takes considerable practice to perfect though because you always face the risk of the keeper running out and grabbing the ball away from you.

► You can perform great dummies to out fox defenders and the goalies. Simply power up a shot and then just as you release, press one of the other buttons to cancel it out. When aiming at goal the braindead twerp between the posts will usually dive in anticipation... leaving you all the time into the world to slot the ball into the opposite corner.

► An ideal way of scoring from free kicks is to try a dipping chip over the wall. To pull this off, simply use the top button to take your shot, then just after you've released, rotate the directional pad 180° in a clockwise direction and watch it nip in just under the cross bar.

► The best attack pattern to use when wishing to score from the air is undoubtedly the 4-3-3 formation using the crossing strategy.

How to play against Warner, Rage and Star Trek (!!!)

Yes it's true, not only can you compete against the special Warner and Rage teams, but Trekkies can also enjoy thrashing a whole team of characters from the various *Star Trek* generations. All you have to do is win the World Cup to enter a bonus Special Cup tournament featuring all of the above teams. Reckon you can take on the intergalactic celebs?

General Tips

► The key to scoring undoubtedly lies in getting the ball forward to your star players. They have the skill and power to beat the goalie.

► Incidentally though, contrary to popular belief, there are no preset ways of scoring – it's completely random. The goalies have been specifically programmed to home in on the ball carrier and narrow the angle of which they've got to score.

► The most spectacular ways to score off of a corner are to chip the ball into the near edge of the penalty area, and



Hot Shots!

You've read the shorts tips on how to improve your game, but what about what really matters... how to score blinding goals? Although apparently goals are totally random (according to Rage), here are the *Play boy's* favourite methods (that seem to work quite often, ahem!).

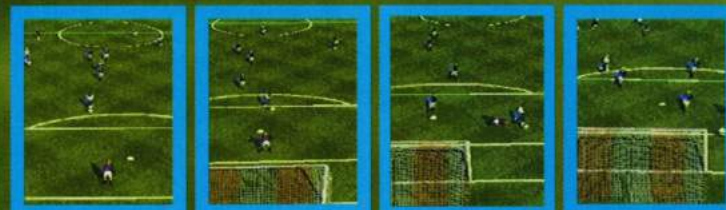
Dummy Counter

Don't ask us what it means but it sounds damn sexy! The idea is to attack the penalty area from one side, hold off with the shot and run horizontally across the front. Then as you near the other side, charge up an X button shot, turn, and pound it into the opposite corner of the net. Usually the keeper anticipates the shot to go the other side, thus ensuring you with a sure fire (sort of!) method of scoring.



Dribble Round

A bit of a cop out this one, but it does sometimes get you off the hook at the last minute. Simply attack the goal face-on and then as the keeper shuffles out to grab the ball, dribble round him and pop it in the onion bag. Sorted. (you hope!).



Long Shot

Finally, picture the scene; the last few seconds of the World Cup are ticking away, your team is trailing by a goal and basically you've got to clutch all your straws and try anything to get even. So what do you do? Simple, you have a crack from anywhere. Every time you get the ball no matter whereabouts on the pitch you are, it's always worth a shot in the dark just for the glory factor. You never know, you may even score!

Comer Bang

This saucy sounding super shot in fact has no sexual connotations involved at all. All you have to do is run straight up towards the goal making sure that you line yourself up with the inside of one of the posts before you enter the penalty area. Now as you approach the six yard box, let rip with the X button whilst pressing the D-pad in the direction of the nearest post.



Diagonal Shot

Simple, just run into the penalty area from one of the corners and blast in a full powered X button shot. If you want to be fancy and attempt to baffle the keeper, you can also put a touch of swerve on it to send him the wrong way.



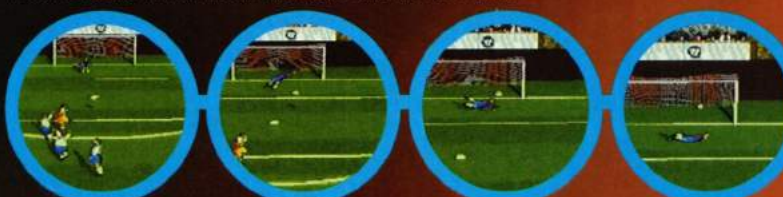
Tight Squeeze

Goals come from some of the strangest angles imaginable, so why not capitalise on this and try some bizarre shots yourself. The best one is to enter the penalty area, run towards the goal line a little distance to one side of the goal, turn 90° and try your luck. You never know, by lingering around in the penalty area for that amount of time, there's always the possibility that the opposition will eventually foul you.



Side Swerve

This is always a cracking way to notch up loads of goals, simply dash face-on towards the goal and then fire off a X button shot as you enter the penalty area. As you release the button, apply a touch of swerve to slot the ball around the keeper and into the corner.



The gripping saga of PlayStation sound concludes this month with a glance into the trippy world of QSound, the beginning of an era in game music, plus our prediction for the number one slot in the Christmas album chart. Confused? You don't know the half of it mate. Ryan Butt reports.

The defini of sol

Last month we spoke to one of the unsung heroes of game music and got to test some of the sexiest bits of sound kit in the universe for free. But now onto much more important things. Something radical is happening in the videogames industry. People are recognising the mainstream awareness that is being generated by the likes of PlayStation and, be they software companies or cash-hungry agents, are using it to their advantage. The result is mainstream movie stars popping up all over the shop to star in some new CD ROM, forgotten sitcom stars doing narratives or better still, popular musicians penning piping-hot tunes for video game soundtracks. As the console systems continue to evolve, the trendier it becomes for big names to get involved. The PlayStation is probably guiltier than most for encouraging change and breathing a whole new way of life into a genre that once consisted of little more than an ugly black box and a revolutionary game called Pong!

Orbita

tion und

(part two)

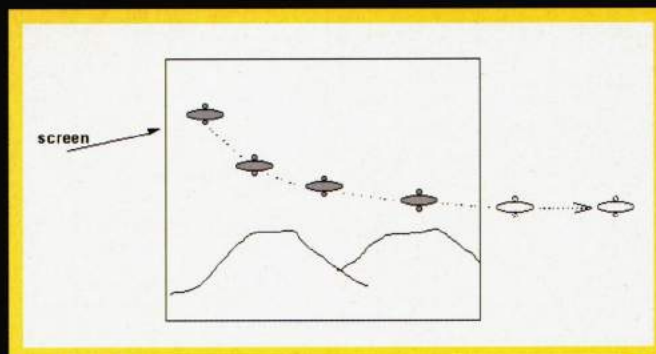
Q The Music

You may or may not have heard (sorry) of it yet, but amongst industry people, the QSound people are creating a real buzz. Just why are so many big daddy software companies falling over themselves to get QSound into their favourite software and just what the hell is QSound anyway? Ryan Butt takes time out to explain...

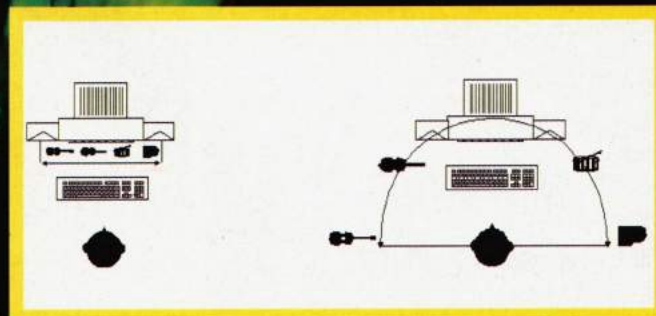


The concept that has come to be known as QSound was developed five years ago, although a process of intense evolution and extensive research into the human hearing process has brought the concept to its present state. Perhaps the best way to describe QSound is electronic voice throwing – high-tech ventriloquism if you will, whereby sounds are generated within a 180° arc around the listener. Strangely enough, the effect

can be produced using normal twin stereo speakers, but the QSound effects exceed the normal boundaries of the speakers and instead cast the sounds into the normally unoccupied field to the sides of the listener, giving the impression that the sound is coming out of thin air. In other words, it's like surround sound. The effect of QSound is truly cosmic, so it's no surprise that a stream of top software houses are queuing up to enlist



Honest, this does make some sense. The two shots actually show how the wavetable of sound goes beyond the conventional. So (below) we have normal on the left, and the 180 degree field of noise created by Qsound, coming from ahead, the left and the right.



the assistance of this futuristic system to bring their products to life and give them that extra edge in next gen sound.

Companies such as Sega, Atari, Virgin, Intel, IBM, Electronic Arts, Ocean, Empire and Capcom have incorporated the revolutionary system into their products, the latter, well, who could forget those breathtaking fireball effects echoing from one ear to the other in their *Super Street Fighter II* coin-op machine?

As far as the home systems go, QSound has already made an impact on the 3DO and 32X systems with roughly 20 games in circulation that utilise the system including EA's *Toughman Contest*, and Sega's *Ecco the Dolphin*. It is predicted that by Christmas '96 250 titles will use the QSound technology, and this very instant it's heading straight for the PlayStation at high speed – beware!

Mass desire amongst software companies is just the start of it though, million-selling solo artist and founder member of Pink Floyd, Roger Waters, has used the QSound mixing system on his album, *'Amused to Death'* and commented: "Remember the jump from mono to stereo? In my opinion stereo to QSound is just as radical."

The former Floydster then went on to say "The effect is amazing!" What higher recommendation do you need?



Our art editor was NOT amused to death by this picture. Sorry, below is big Q-sound devotee Roger Waters and he psychadelic swirl above is his album, *Amused to Death*. Buy one now.



"It's radical, man!"

Wipeout The Album

As well as being the best racing game to appear on the PlayStation so far, *Wipeout* could well go down in the video



A game concert album, whatever will they think of next? Actually, the line up isn't that bad, check it out on the far right hand side and win a copy. Then you can listen to *New Order*, *Leftfield*, *The Prodigy*, *Suncream*, *Manic Street Preachers* and *The Chemical Brothers*. Smart.

game annals as the launch pad for a massive improvement in the soundtrack quality of video games. It isn't so much a game... (yes it was - ed) more of an experience, and no one can deny that this has a little something to do with the soundtrack. This whole feature focuses on the way in which music has become such an important medium in the overall gaming experience, and

Wipeout is the game that reshaped the standards for others to follow by incorporating not one, not two, but three (!!!) recognised dance bands into the mix. Now you may think that the heading for this section is rather ironic given that in a sense the game could be described as an "album". But oh no, Sony Interactive (the company behind *Wipeout*) have gone one better by teaming up with the Sony Music division to produce the real McCoy - an audio CD based upon the



concept of *Wipeout*, but more about that later. First we've got just a little confession to make...

After all our bragging about exclusive talks with the boys involved in the *Wipeout* soundtrack, work ties meant that it was impossible to be granted an audience with the lads this month.

However, we fully intend to honour our promise and interview the three major bands involved as soon as their record companies give them a bit of breathing space!

Corporate gigs.

However, for an insight into the soundtrack's production and an industry opinion of how videogame music is progressing at such an alarming rate, we invited Glen O'Connell - Public Relations Manager with Sony Interactive to get up on his soapbox and talk frankly about the major crossover that's occurring.

Play: So Glen, why now? What has happened to spark this sudden but welcome surge in the quality of videogame music?

G O'C: "Within the last 12 months the CD medium has really taken off for the mass games market. The result is that in-game musicians should no longer be perceived as just monotonous bleep and noise merchants. Many are now able to produce studio quality music which is often equally as good as many Top 40 artists themselves. The problem with certain PC CD machines though was not the quality of the sound cards

themselves (i.e. the excellent Sound Blaster AWE 32 etc.), but the speakers and level of audio equipment that is used to play it back to the actual user. Certain people seemed happy to continue to use tiny speakers that didn't really give the audio justice. However, with the release of the Sony PlayStation there now exists a medium for real-time audio playback through an ever increasing level of home audiovisual experiences such as Stereo hi-fi and Dolby Surround Sound.

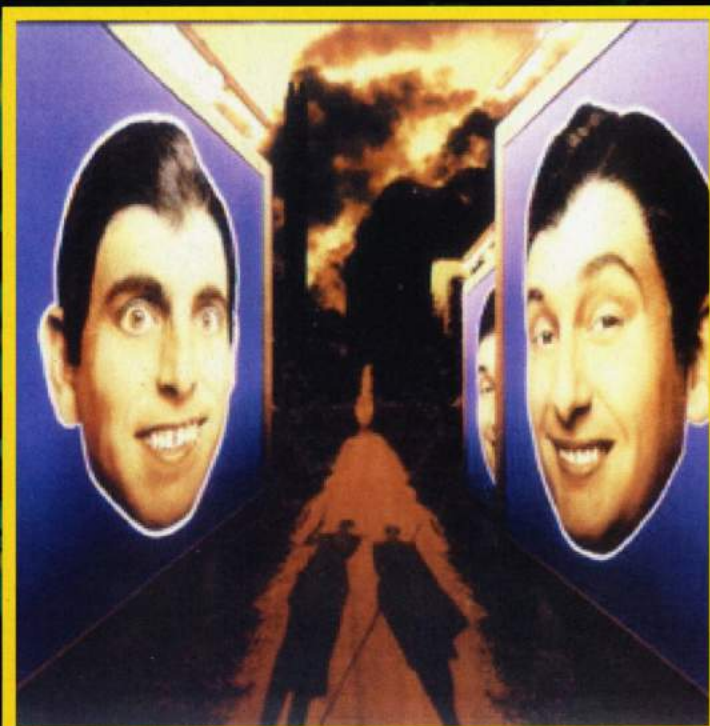
Many of today's TV's have these features built in as standard, which, when complimented with the PlayStation's audio capabilities itself, has managed to get the music industry interested in what was once perceived by them as a dirty word - VideoGames"

Play: *Wipeout* was the starting block that set the standards for others to follow, how did you get *Leftfield*, *Orbital* and *The Chemical Brothers* involved?

G O'C: "The music industry has dipped its toes into the games market

once or twice before, and it has to be said there was limited success for both parties involved. But not content with simply emulating others who had followed before we decided that with *Wipeout* being one of our first generation PlayStation games we'd have to approach it in a slightly different manner. We targeted *Orbital* as one of a select group of high profile dance orientated bands we thought would be most suitable for the style of game we were developing. Having been impressed with the concept and gameplay video we supplied them, *Orbital* decided to go into the studio and record a specific track for the game itself (entitled *Petrol*). This was previewed at Glastonbury and went down very well with the crowd. Once they were signed up for the game,

Orbital





The Chemical Brothers. Cool sounds from a cool group. Don't know about the guy/girl walking down a small town American high street though. Bit Aerosmith isn't it?

we decided to continue to also push for *Leftfield* and *The Chemical Brothers*, who were on our original list of 'the cooler bands' around we thought would be suitable for the style and continuity we wanted to achieve with *Wipeout*. They both decided to submit tracks they'd both recorded before, but were very popular within the club circuit and, as such, would give further strength to the actual game's credibility. So by then we had three tracks from three very high media profile artists to compliment the in-house tracks by an artist called Tim Wright who goes under the Cold Storage name. In fact Tim's music itself has been talked about in

very high esteem by a lot of people not necessarily associated with the game, and we could well see a reversal in traditions and see his music going the same way as the three bands mentioned above in the not so distant future."

Play: Tell us about this 'concept' album then? What's it all about?

G O'C: "Another thing we did whilst looking at getting bands involved was contact Sony Music with an idea of

doing a compilation album based on the concept of *Wipeout*. It was not something they had done before with the games section of the company, so it was a real challenge to see whether they could pull it off. Movie compilations are often very big sellers for record companies, and the awareness for the actual property can be phenomenal. There is a 'synergy' within Sony to exploit the different divisions of the

parent group, and our *Wipeout* suggestion was just what they were waiting for. What we've done is actually licence the three in-game tracks (*Orbital*, *Leftfield* and *The Chemical Brothers*) for the album and added equally

high profile bands like *The Prodigy* and *New Order* to it. The finished product is a very strong album that is very much in line with what people are listening to in clubs nowadays (groovy - ed). And to round the whole thing off in the same context we commissioned the Designers Republic (who recently did, amongst other things, the *Pulp* sleeve) to do the front artwork for the album and of course, the game packaging."

Play: What are your thoughts after making the impossible possible and re-shaping the way in which videogames are perceived?

G O'C: "This whole exercise has clearly shown that the music industry can work together hand in hand with the games industry when it wants to. Sure it will take more than one game to break down the full barriers put up by people who simply didn't understand what games are all about. But we're definitely moving forward together in the right direction and we're more than glad that *Wipeout* is the game that got the ball rolling."

Win the CD everyone is talking about!

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. By reading on, you could well be on the way to nabbing yourself a copy of the hot new *Wipeout* concept CD that features a whole host of renowned dance and rock artists. But first here is a little bit of information about the album.

Entitled, simply, *Wipeout*, the album will be released on November 6th in all good record stores over the country. Check out this playlist...

Track:

Afro Ride
Chemical Beats
Blue Monday
Age of Love
Wipeout (Petrol)
One Love
La Tristesse Duera
When
Good Enough
Circus Bells
Captain Dread
Transamazonia

Artist:

Leftfield
Chemical Brothers
New Order
Age of Love
Orbital
Prodigy
Manic Street Preachers
Sunscream
B. B (featuring Angie Brown)
Robert Armani
Dreadzone
The Shamen

How to win

Play, in association with Sony Interactive, is giving away 20 copies of the *Wipeout* CD. All you have to do is correctly answer the following question and hope you're one of the lucky ones:

Q. Which company produced the mind-blowing game, *Wipeout*?

- a. Andrex
- b. The Beach Boys
- c. Sony Interactive



Answers on a postcard to **Play magazine, Paragon Publishing**, Paragon House, St. Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. All entries must arrive by December 13th. Please note: The editor's decision is final and employees of Paragon Publishing, relatives and anyone who's ever shagged a rock star may not enter.



PLAY back

You've all seen buyers' guides in mags before... boring aren't they?

Ours is different though. We boldly go where no PG has gone before and tackle the problem of games becoming dated. A game may be excellent now, but in a few months time it could have been pummelled into submission by something even better, or we might just have got bored with it.

So to address this problem, we've introduced a new category that marks the games in accordance to what is currently around, and if it is bettered, the marks will gradually deplete. Or, as we've discovered this issue, we might find we've undermarked a game. We'll explain the change in the comment bit. So read on to see what has and hasn't changed.

Game	Review Score	Comment	Date of Review	Current Score
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Beat 'em-ups

1. (1) Tekken	95%	Simply the best (for now)	Nov '95	95%
2. (2) MK3	93%	Bloody unbeatable stuff gore fans	Nov '95	93%
3. (3) Street Fighter: The Movie	85%	It's beginning to grate	Nov '95	79%
4. (4) Battle Arena Toshinden	76%	Great looking stuff for beginners	Nov '95	76%
5. (6) Zero Divide	68%	We've found a free game of Phalanx!	Nov '95	75%
6. (5) WWF Wrestlemania	74%	Competent, if unspectacular, staged boredom	Nov '95	74%

Combat Flight Sims

1. (-) Air Combat	81%	Even a lobotomised tortoise could fly this	Dec '95	81%
2. (1) Ace Combat	79%	<i>Air Combat</i> in Japanese	Nov '95	79%

Shooters

1. (-) Lone Soldier	92%	In a class of its lone	Dec '95	92%
2= (1) Loaded	85%	big, bad blasting action	Nov '95	85%
2= (-) Philosoma	85%	The stuff films are made of	Dec '95	85%
4. (-) Off World Interceptor	77%	Stomach-churning, high-speed mayhem	Dec '95	77%
5. (-) Viewpoint	74%	Harder than John 'the one' Holmes	Dec '95	74%
6. (2) Rapid Reload	71%	Could use a rapid rethink	Nov '95	71%
7. (-) Total Eclipse Turbo	69%	Totally eclipsed by confusion	Dec '95	69%
8= (-) Starblade α	68%	Light cruising on a mono rail	Dec '95	68%
8= (3) Raiden Project	68%	A perfect arcade conversion, shame really	Nov '95	68%
10. Twinbee Deluxe Pack	65%	A temporary burst of insanity	Dec '95	65%

Game	Review Score	Comment	Date of Review	Current Score
11. (4) Kileak The Blood	57%	A weak corridor game	Nov '95	57%
12. (5) Cyber Sled	55%	Best left in the arcades	Nov '95	55%
13. (6) Zeitgeist	51%	Incredibly slow and highly repetitive	Nov '95	51%
14. (7) Novastorm	38%	A definite disappointment	Nov '95	38%

Sports Sims

1. (2) Striker '96	89%	We've learnt a few new tricks	Nov '95	91%
2. (1) NBA Jam: TE	90%	Sorted speedy sporty sim	Nov '95	90%
3. (-) PGA Tour '96	86%	Course-lacking, bogey-belting bliss	Dec '95	86%
4. (-) New Jap Pro Wrestling	84%	The fat boys done good	Dec '95	84%
5. (3) Boxer's Road	82%	Great boxing action – eventually	Nov '95	82%
6. (4) Goalstorm	69%	One goal wonder	Dec '95	69%
7. (5) J-League Winning Eleven	73%	<i>Goalstorm</i> with Jap teams	Nov '95	66%
8. (6) Ground Stroke Tennis	65%	Good looks, little substance	Nov '95	65%
9. (-) Prime Goal EX	62%	The EX should read Exile	Dec '95	62%
10. (-) King Bowling	37%	Strike it off your shopping list	Dec '95	37%

Strategy Games

1. (1) Theme Park	86%	More fun than Thorpe Park	Nov '95	86%
2. (2) 3D Lemmings	69%	Nice idea, but not for me	Nov '95	69%
3. (-) Hebereke's Popitto	43%	Pop off Hebereke!	Dec '95	43%

Adventure Games

1. (1) Discworld	74%	Just don't mention the monkey	Nov '95	74%
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Racers

1 (1) WipeOut	94%	We've found the extra track	Nov '95	95%
2. (2) Ridge Racer	93%	Go on then, buy it	Nov '95	93%
3. (3) Destruction Derby	86%	Fun, but durability is a problem	Nov '95	81%
4. (-) Twisted Metal	78%	Slams on the brakes too early	Dec '95	78%
5. (-) ESPN Extreme Sports	73%	A rolling geek gathers no cred	Dec '95	73%
6. (-) Cyberspeed	65%	Novel idea, same old story	Dec '95	65%
7. (4) Motor Toon GP	69%	Wild, wacky, but limited	Summer '95	60%

Platformers

1= (1=) Rayman	87%	Fiendishly difficult, but fun	Nov '95	87%
1= (1=) Jumping Flash	87%	Grippingly addictive & challenging. Smart.	Nov '95	87%
3. (-) Herme Hopperhead	53%	Unacceptable fodder	Dec '95	53%

In the indian With . . . Mevlut Dinc

This month, we're off down the Eye Of The Tiger, Bournemouth's finest curry house, with Mevlut Dinc. Mev's the boss of developer Vivid Image, creators of top games *Street Racer* and *Rayman*.



• Name: Mevlut Dinc
• Job: Managing Director of Vivid Image
• Fave Curry: Lamb Tikka
• Fave Game: *Virtua Fighter 2*

Play: What makes a good game?

MD: Vivid Image! Or, in other words, slick gameplay, performance, style and multi-player competition.

Play: Who thinks up your games? How do you decide which ideas to work on?

MD: Vivid Image! How many times am I allowed to say Vivid Image?

MD: Actually, everybody in the company is allowed to suggest ideas but ultimately I decide which concept to develop into a game. We do not produce that many titles so each new idea has to be at least as good as the last one. It is very important that everybody feels 100% about any new idea before we start.

Play: Right, what about the new machines, is developing for them any more fun than 16-bit, or even 8-bit, or is hardware simply a consumer's worry?

MD: Not really. Developing original products is a lot of fun full stop. The satisfaction comes from pushing the limits and trying to beat your idea of what can be achieved with the hardware available. I

believe what we do is a craft and we try to improve it all the time. At the moment I think the software is having difficulty keeping pace with developments in hardware. Everybody needs to spend time to learn the new hardware to make the most of it.

Play: How much actual programming do you still do?

MD: Not enough but I do share my

knowledge and experience with our programmers and really enjoy discussing with them the best possible ways to implement any ideas.

Play: Why do you think so many games simply seem to be variants on a successful formula? Is it the hardware limitations, a lack of imagination or is it something else?

MD: I believe it is very difficult to come up with original ideas that make great games all the time. To me the originality in most cases is presentation and style. Look at the film industry, *Pulp Fiction* is not a very original idea but its style, characters and dialogue are so fresh and that's what makes it so successful. We always try to do the same with our games, only in our case we have to work on slick gameplay, plenty of options and value for money.

Some publishers just try and make sure they have enough products to cover all the successful game genres, a racing game, a football game and some sort of fighting game. The biggest problem is that they tend to produce these as quickly as possible and as a result the market is flooded with similar games which are very average. I am sure this does very little to help the industry.

Play: Too right. Do you think platforms such as the PlayStation will change this?

MD: Maybe. The PlayStation is a good piece of hardware but machinery alone does not make good games, it can only help developers enhance their efforts to make better games. My starting point is that what we're doing should be a very good playable game on any platform. PlayStation also allows us to be more ambitious with our games and that is what we are doing.

Play: Video games were once labelled the new rock 'n' roll, what happened?

MD: It's still very much rock 'n' roll to me.

Play: Has anyone ever come up to you and said they're a massive fan of your work and asked or begged, for your autograph?

MD: Once or twice at computer shows.

Play: Sony is trying to make the PlayStation cool, and bring the twenty-somethings back into video games. Is the video games industry cool yet?

MD: I think twenty-somethings are already back in our industry. The problem is how long can we keep them with us. The video industry can only be as cool as the games we produce.

Play: Is the PlayStation?

MD: Yes, but lets hope the games will make it even cooler rather than colder.

Play: Ok, the ultimate coolness question, do you own up to being a computer programmer at parties?

MD: What parties? I don't have time to party. Of course I own up to being involved in videogames. I believe the videogame industry is very dynamic and I am proud to be part of it.

Play: Cool. We hear you're a bit of a sports nut, which ones do you play?

MD: I still try to play some football but the old age is unfortunately catching up on me. It takes me two weeks to recover from a game now.

Play: Ouch. What about computer football games, any favourites?

MD: Sensible Soccer is still the best in my opinion. It is just simply very playable and to me that's what the games should be about: PLAYABILITY.

Play: Right, finishing up can you list the following in order of importance - cash, cars, football, video games, sex.

MD: At the moment, with the bill on its way and needing to get home, the above order is perfect for me.

Play: Stranded on a Desert Island time, only this one's got its own grand prix circuit. Pick the most desirable combination to have of car, partner, video game and games machine

MD: If I were stranded on a desert island I would just have my partner with my favourite music, and spend the time walking the track!

Arena



Well, Play is only one issue old and already the letters are flooding into the office, as you may have guessed, this page is your page. E-Mail, Snail Mail, praise and moans, questions and rants. If you have something to say to the nation's PlayStation gamers or indeed something you want to ask Dave, just get writing to one of the two addresses featured below. We'd love to hear from you. As I said, this is your page and we couldn't do it without you.

Send your mail to: Arena, **Play** Magazine, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St. Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS or E-Mail Dave Perry at: dperry@paragon.co.uk

Have a voice.

Scart Attack

Dave,

No one (magazines or otherwise) seems to have reported on the appalling connections at the back of the PlayStation....

1. If you have a SCART television...

The official SCART cable is still not available and the existing third party cables run from the composite video output socket (NOT the AV socket) thus you still get a poor streaky picture on the screen (the proper cable should run from the AV out socket and use the separate RGB capability of SCART to get a better picture rather than merging RGB into one signal) - come on Sony why the hell weren't the official cables available on the launch date ???

2. If you don't have a SCART television...

Much worse, Sony's fancy modulator automatic switcher is very good but just how do you connect a proper stereo hi-fi to the PlayStation while that stupid modulator block is in the back of the PlayStation. The left channel output is physically blocked and you can only access the right hand channel output. Even if you made your own extender cables to allow you physical access to the lefthand output you would still get mono in the left channel. Why on earth didn't Sony realise that the "main" console set-up consists of a normal television (no SCART) but with some sort of real hi-fi ???

I don't want to slag Sony too much - they have given us the best console on the market to date and at a very reasonable price, but it looks like they don't know their British market very well (although they are much better than Sega who released a SCART only Saturn !!!). Come on, hurry up and give us

proper SCART cables which keep red, green and blue separate and a redesigned modulator block for those with hi-fis to put that amazing CD quality sound through....

Tich

(Richard Bruce Kent)
(ceerbk@cee.hw.ac.uk)

Interesting point Bruce. Care to reply Sony? I've left Bruce's E-Mail number for you.

Important Question

Dear Dave,

I wonder if you would happen to know if *Wipeout* is getting a Japanese release, as I have a Japanese Sony PlayStation. Or, do you know if it's possible to play PAL released games on the Japanese machine?

Thank you for your time,
Simon Harris.

No problem Simon. Wipeout is actually being released in Japan in February 1996, so it will surely be appearing on import during that month for all NTSC machine owners.

As far as playing PAL games on a Japanese machine, it is possible but involves you performing a simple trick with a match stick. I can't tell you what that trick is as I have promised Sony that I will keep it a secret for now, but there are plenty of sites on the Internet that explain what to do. If you are not a net surfer, your local import shop will probably be able to tell you anyway. Mind you, having said all that, the picture will be in black and white on your TV anyway, due to the difference in frequency of the import machines. Sorry, but you just had to have one of them first didn't you?

CD or not CD?

Dear Dave,

You can't believe how pleased I was when I finally found a PlayStation magazine on the shelves at my local newsagents that provided all the information and quality that I expect from a publication about my 'shiny new console' as you put it. I wonder though if you are going to covermount a CD on future issues of **Play** as I think it would be the only way that you could make it any better. I'm sure it would sell really well as people like me who have just bought a Sony PlayStation would love an opportunity to sample more new games as they arrive. It would give us a chance to see what they are like before we spend our money.

Come on Dave, help us out.

Colin Kimble, Hitchin

*It was always our intention Colin, to covermount PlayStation playable demos on the cover of **Play** magazine. It would of course push the cover price up a bit, as the CDs are not cheap, so we even planned to release a version of the magazine without it and give you a choice.*

*However, it is proving an uphill task, as Sony seem to be making it very difficult for magazines to duplicate and get these demos approved. The problem has meant even the Official Magazine missing its launch date by a long, long way. We wanted to make sure you could actually buy **Play** when we said you could and so haven't done a CD yet.*

We hope to provide a cover CD very soon, but in the meantime you can help us by filling out and sending Sony the pre-prepared letter on the other side of this page. Between us, we'll make them listen.

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Played Out...

This month's **Played Out** is a little bit special. You see, it's interactive. We'd like to give you a choice every month between buying an issue of **Play** with a covermounted CD demo, or one without. But we can't at the moment, because we cannot get Sony to sort out their disc approval and duplication

procedures. So, we thought what we should do is to get you, the gamers, to help us show Sony just how keen you are to get your hands on playable demos of games before they arrive in the shops.

All you have to do is cut out or photocopy and sign the letter below, then send it to Sony's Phil Harrison at the address shown. Easy. Together we can make a difference. For the cost of a stamp you can make a multi-national corporation stand up and take notice and give yourself a wider choice. Or, you could e-mail the text below to him for next to nothing (please stick to the text). Then either send a photocopy or forward your e-mail to us at play@paragon.co.uk and we'll have a special prize draw, giving away some of the top rated games over the next few months (where available). Let's do it.

Phil Harrison, Communications Director, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, 13 Great Marlborough Street. London. W1V 2LP
or E-mail Phil at phil_harrison@sepc.sony.com

Dear Mr Harrison,

I am a proud PlayStation owner living in So far I have enjoyed my new console immensely but I am worried at the way my favourite PlayStation magazine, *Play*, has apparently been unable to get permission to covermount playable demos of new games for me to enjoy.

I know there are plenty of these demos available, and that the Play team at Paragon Publishing are really keen to regularly feature these CDs on the front of their magazine. But it seems that the procedure for doing so (gaining disc approval, getting the discs duplicated by Sony, etc.) is way too complicated, if indeed it even exists.

Come on Sony, pull your finger out. Communicate with the magazines and help them spread the word about the power of PlayStation, because they are your direct link to the people who really count – us. The Gamesplayers.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

(print name)

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